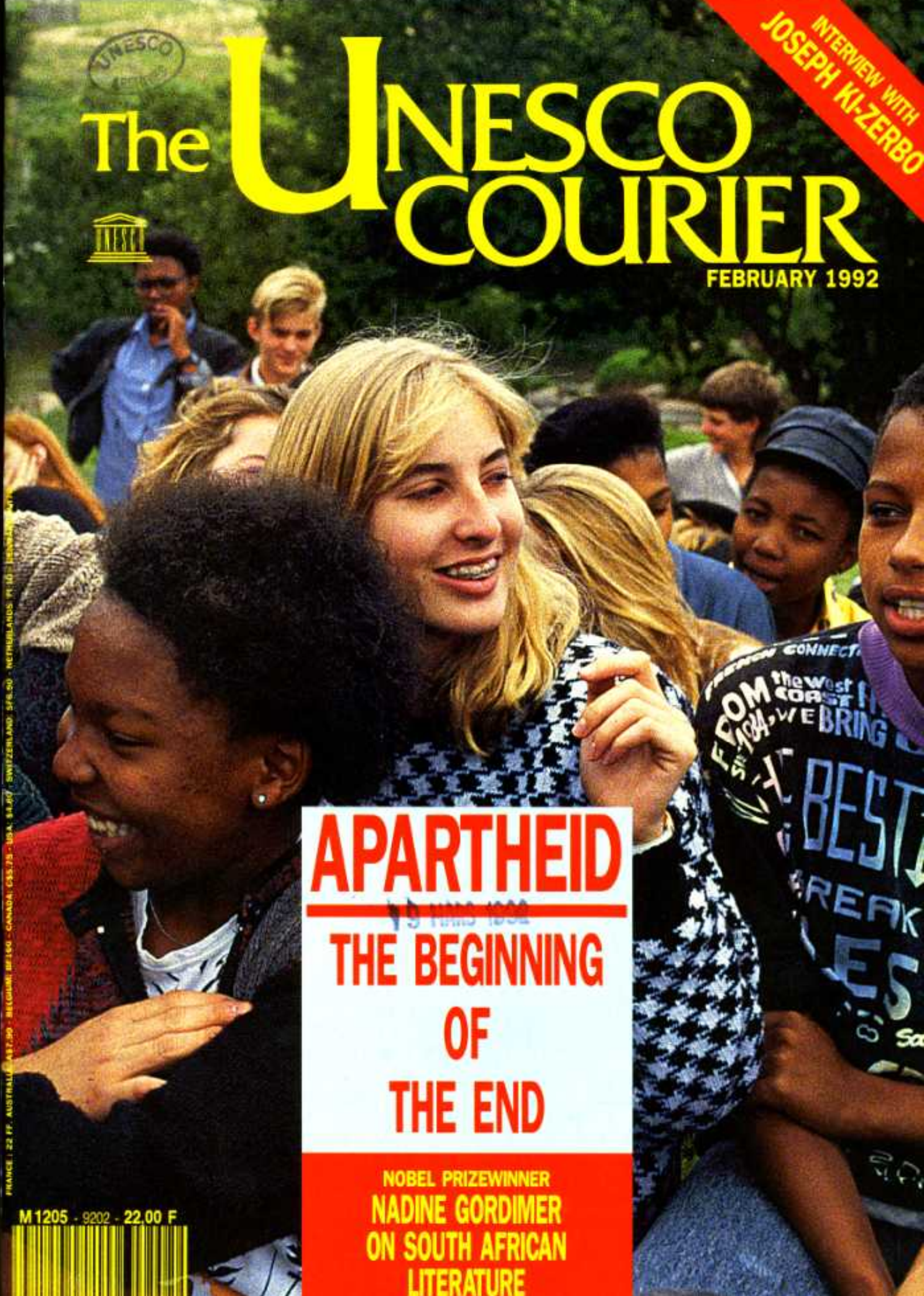
UNESCO

The UNESCO COURIER

FEBRUARY 1992

INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH KI-ZERBO



APARTHEID

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

NOBEL PRIZEWINNER
NADINE GORDIMER
ON SOUTH AFRICAN
LITERATURE

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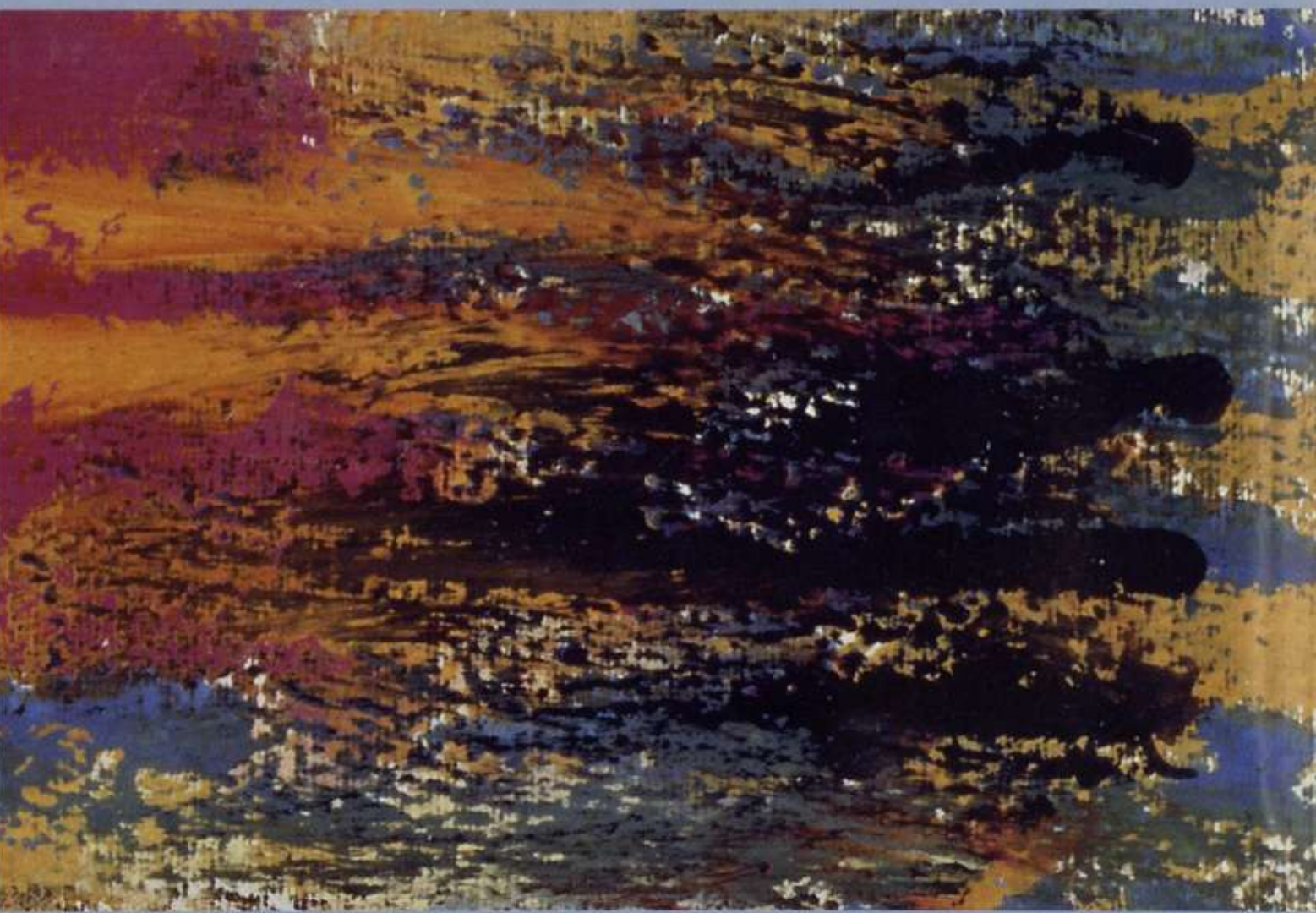
encounters

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.



Textiles at Monte Albán
1991, gouache on paper (11 x 7.5 cm)
by Christian Olivé

At Monte Albán, a pre-Columbian site in Mexico's Oaxaca valley, Indians spread out on the ground colourful clothes which they weave to sell to tourists. A visit to the site inspired the French painter Christian Olivé to paint this gouache on grainy paper which evokes the weave of Indian cloth.

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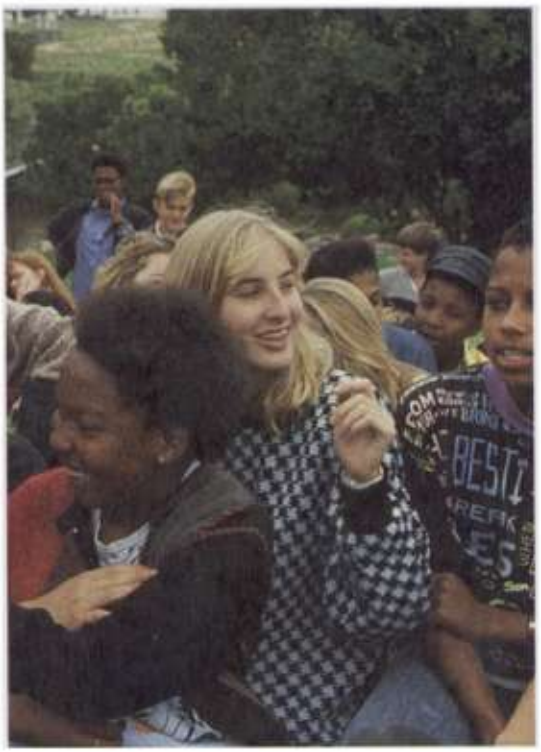
JOSEPH KI-ZERBO



The UNESCO COURIER

45th YEAR
Published monthly in 36 languages and in Braille

"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,

"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed...

"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

"For these reasons, the States parties ... are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives...".

Extract from the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO, London, 16 November 1945

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THE BEGINNING OF THE END

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Cover:
A multi-racial school in South Africa.

Back cover:
An anti-apartheid poster commissioned by the United Nations calls for a new South Africa.

The Editors wish to thank Ms. Carrie Marias, of UNESCO's Division of Human Rights and Peace, and Ms. Ruth Lazarus for their help in the preparation of this issue.

UNESCO'S FIRST 45 YEARS *(Part V)*

by Michel Conil Lacoste

The impact of the Experimental World Literacy Programme

1975

General policy

■ The United Nations University is established in Tokyo under the joint auspices of the United Nations and UNESCO.

■ A conference is held in Paris on the educational problems of the 25 least developed countries.

■ A group of experts commissioned to evaluate functional literacy work carried out in 11 Member States since 1967 presents its report, which is published the following year by UNESCO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Its conclusion: the Experimental World Literacy Programme has had mixed results, but has yielded important lessons for the future.

Exact and natural sciences

■ The Intergovernmental Co-ordinating Council of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) meets for the first time. The IHP follows up the work of the International Hydrological Decade, putting emphasis on methodology and training in the rational management of water resources.

■ A World Network of Microbiological Resource Centres (MIRCENs) is established, with branches in Bangkok, Brisbane, Dakar, Guatemala City, Cairo, Nairobi and Porto Alegre (Brazil).

■ A meeting of experts on the ethical problems posed by recent advances in biology is held at Varna in Bulgaria. *Biology and Ethics*, a publication based on the proceedings of the meeting, marks a notable advance in thinking on the subject.

Culture

■ An Advisory Committee for the Study of Oceanic Cultures is set up to promote research into the cultures of the Pacific.

1976

General policy

■ The General Conference, held in Nairobi, is opened by Jomo Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya. It decides to create a Drafting and Negotiating Group to seek consensus solutions to sensitive questions.

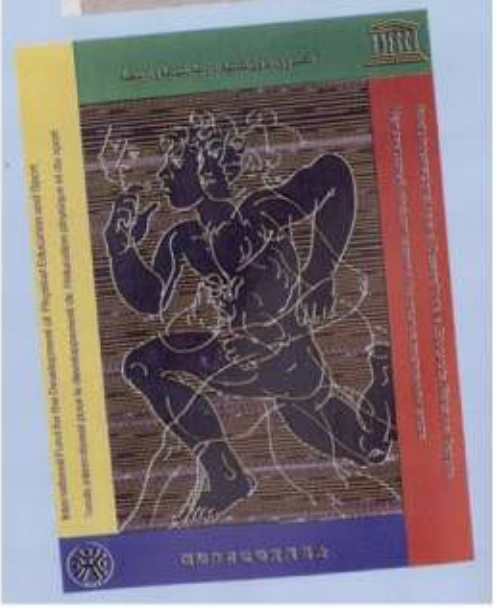
■ The Conference adopts a Medium-Term Plan for 1977-1982.

■ A General Information Programme is inaugurated to regroup activities relating to the exchange of scientific and technological information, covered by UNISIST, and those dealing with the planning of national library, archive and documentation infrastructures, covered by NATIS (National Information Systems).

Education

■ The General Conference adopts a Recommendation on the development of adult education that enshrines the concept of lifelong education, defined as follows, that UNESCO has helped to propagate: "Education and learning, far from being limited to the period of attendance at school, should extend throughout life, include all skills and branches of knowledge, use all possible means, and give the opportunity to all people for full development of the personality."

■ The first international conference of ministers and senior civil servants responsible for physical education and sport in the training of young people is held in Paris.



Exact and natural sciences

■ After 12 years' work, UNESCO completes publication of the *Geological World Atlas,* prepared in collaboration with the International Geological Congress's Commission for the Geological Map of the World.

Social sciences

■ A meeting of experts on inter-regional co-operation in the social sciences is held in Paris.

Culture

■ In Nairobi, the General Conference adopts a Recommendation concerning popular participation in cultural life.
■ An advisory committee for Arab culture is established.

Communication

■ San José, the capital of Costa Rica, hosts the first in a series of regional intergovernmental conferences on communications policies. Others will later be held in Kuala Lumpur (1979), Yaoundé (1980), and Khartoum (1987).
■ UNESCO contributes to the establishment in Nairobi of the African Council on Communication Education. Initially grouping 19 institutions, the Council now has 65 members.
■ UNESCO uses a communications satellite for the first time during a session of the General Conference.

Events

■ Two Nobel Peace Prize winners, Willy Brandt and Philip Noel-Baker, and Alfred Kastler, Nobel laureate for physics, take part in a Round Table organized by UNESCO on the theme of "Cultural and Intellectual Co-operation and the New International Economic Order". Other participants included Nancy Reeves, Tewfik al-Hakim, P.-M. Henry, Samir Amin, Jean d'Ormesson, Yannis Xenakis, Buckminster Fuller and Peter Ustinov.

Opposite page, from top: Mauritania's Zravié dam is one of several that have been repaired by the Mauritanian rural engineering service with the aid of a joint OPEC/UNESCO project; French edition of a work published by UNESCO on the techniques of information and documentation (2nd edition, revised and expanded, 1990); a poster of the International Fund for Physical Education and Sport (1985).
This page, from top: Han Suyin, writer; Willy Brandt, politician; Iannis Xenakis, composer.

1977

Education

■ An Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education is held in Tbilisi, USSR, under the joint auspices of UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Culture

■ UNESCO contributes to the Festival of African Arts (FESTAC) in Lagos.

Communication

■ The Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development is established in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) to train broadcasters.
■ The International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems starts work under the presidency of Ireland's Sean MacBride. Its report, *Many Voices, One World* (1980), will be published in 17 languages.

Events

■ A Round Table on "The Challenge of the Year 2000" is attended by Han Suyin, Michel Jobert, André Fontaine, Prem Kirpal, Alicia Penalba and others.

1978

General policy

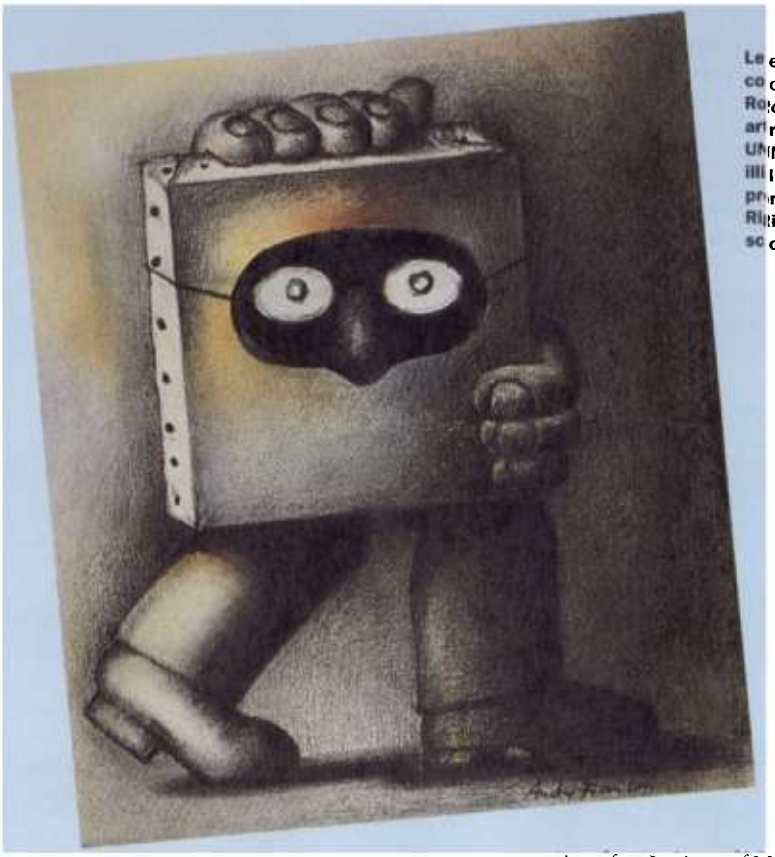
■ UNESCO has 145 Member States, 129 of them with National Commissions.
■ The first World Congress of UNESCO Clubs is held at UNESCO's Paris headquarters.

Education

■ A Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean is established in Caracas.
■ The General Conference sets up an Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport to orient and supervise UNESCO activites in this field. The Committee adopts an international Charter and creates a fund to promote the development of sport and physical education. Working in collaboration with the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education and the International Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, UNESCO focuses on the role of sport in education and the role of education in sport.

Exact and natural sciences

■ UNESCO completes publication of the *Soil Map of the World,* the fruit of 17 years' work in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
■ An Intergovernmental Conference on Strategies and Policies for Informatics is held at Torremolinos (Spain).



Left, a drawing commissioned from the Romanian-born French artist André François for UNESCO poster on the illicit transfer of cultural property. Right, the Egyptian social scientist Aziza Hussein.

Teaching Human Rights

Social sciences

■ To mark the 30th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an international congress on the the teaching of human rights is held in Vienna. Panels of experts meeting in 1979 and 1982 work with the International Institute for Human Rights, based at Strasbourg (France), to develop a programme. The plan eventually adopted by UNESCO includes a section on women's rights.

Culture

■ The General Conference approves the statutes of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation.

■ A meeting of scholars is held in Port-au-Prince (Haïti) on the African slave trade from the 15th to the 19th century.

■ The General Conference decides on the preparation of a *History of the Civilizations of Central Asia.*

Communication

■ After several years of difficult discussions, the General Conference adopts the Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War.

■ A UNESCO-UNDP Programme leads to the creation of an Institute of Mass Communications at the University of Nigeria, Lagos.

Events

■ A Round Table is held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to commemorate the 23rd centenary of the death of Aristotle. Participants include Helene Ahrweiler, M. Arkoun, J. Beaufret, J. Berque, J. Dausset, D. Dubarle, J. Merleau-Ponty, E. Moutsopoulos, R. Thom. A notable contribution is made by Jacques Lacan.

1979

Exact and natural sciences

■ Two reports summarizing the existing state of knowledge about tropical forest ecosystems and tropical grazing-land ecosystems are published under the joint auspices of UNESCO, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

■ The International Soil Museum (now the International Soil Reference and Information Centre) is officially opened at Wageningen in the Netherlands. It was established as a result of co-operation between UNESCO, the Netherlands government and the FAO.

Social sciences

■ A meeting of experts held in Quito (Ecuador) to study "Research on the Idea of Integrated Development" leads to the publication of *A new concept of development: basic tenets,* by Francois Perroux, in 1981.

Culture

■ The editorial committee of a series on studies on *Different Aspects of Islamic Culture,* financed by a donation from the Islamic Call Society, holds its first meeting.

■ The consultative committee for the study of Malay cultures is enlarged to address the cultures of Southeast Asia.

Communication

■ UNESCO and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) set up a working party to examine international telecommunications charges, a common obstacle to the exchange of information.

Events

■ A Peace Forum organized by UNESCO and the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies brings together Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Aziza Hussein, Yuri Zhukov, Sean MacBride, Daniel Oduber, Edgar Faure, Philip Noel-Baker, M.L. Mehrotra, Helen Vlachos and others.

■ Within the framework of International Anti-Apartheid Year, Miriam Makeba sings in UNESCO's main conference hall.

1980

General policy

■ At the 21st session of the General Conference, held in Belgrade, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow becomes the first Director-General to be re-elected unanimously.

■ For 1980, UNESCO spends $61,510,230 of UNDP funds to the benefit of its Member States.

■ The General Conference examines the case of a staff member prevented from returning to his post at UNESCO on political grounds, and adopts a resolution on the independence of the international civil service.

Education

■ The International Panel on the Future Development of Education holds its first meeting in Paris. Participating bodies include the International Association of Universities and the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession.

Exact and natural sciences

■ Eight major regional scientific projects are launched on: applied biotechnology and microbiology (Africa and the Arab states); technological research, training and development (South-east Asia); geology for development (Africa); the management of water resources in rural areas (Latin America; the Arab States); the integrated management of humid tropical zones (inter-regional); arid and semi-arid regions (inter-regional) and coastal ecosystems (inter-regional).

Social sciences

■ A World Congress on Disarmament Education is held in Paris.
■ A symposium is held in Paris on Human Rights in Urban Areas (the same theme will be discussed again in Cairo in 1982).
■ A meeting of experts on Teaching and Research in Philosophy in Africa is held in Nairobi (similar meetings will be held for Asia in 1983 and for Latin America in 1985).

Culture

■ The General Conference adopts the Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist.
■ The Nubian campaign comes to an end with the inauguration of the temples of the island of Philae on their new site on the nearby island of Agilkia.
■ The first volumes of the *General History of Africa* are published: *Methodology and African Prehistory* and *Ancient Civilizations of Africa*. Six further volumes are planned.

Controversy over Communication

Communication

■ Following the series of regional intergovernmental conferences on communications policies, and in line with the directives of the 20th session of the General Conference, UNESCO convenes a special meeting of Member States, the International Conference for Communication Development (DEVCOM), in Paris.
■ Taking up a DEVCOM recommendation, the 21st session of the General Conference decides to launch an International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the goal of which is to correct the imbalances, above all between North and South, in communication infrastructures and capacities.
■ The General Conference invites the Director General to carry out studies relating to the establishment of a new world information and communication order. Two Round Tables on this theme, jointly organized by UNESCO and the United Nations, will be held at Igls (Austria) in 1983 and in Copenhagen three years later. A long and stormy public controversy, partly rooted in misunderstandings, will ensue until the General Conference proposes a new communications policy based on a broader consensus in 1989.

Events

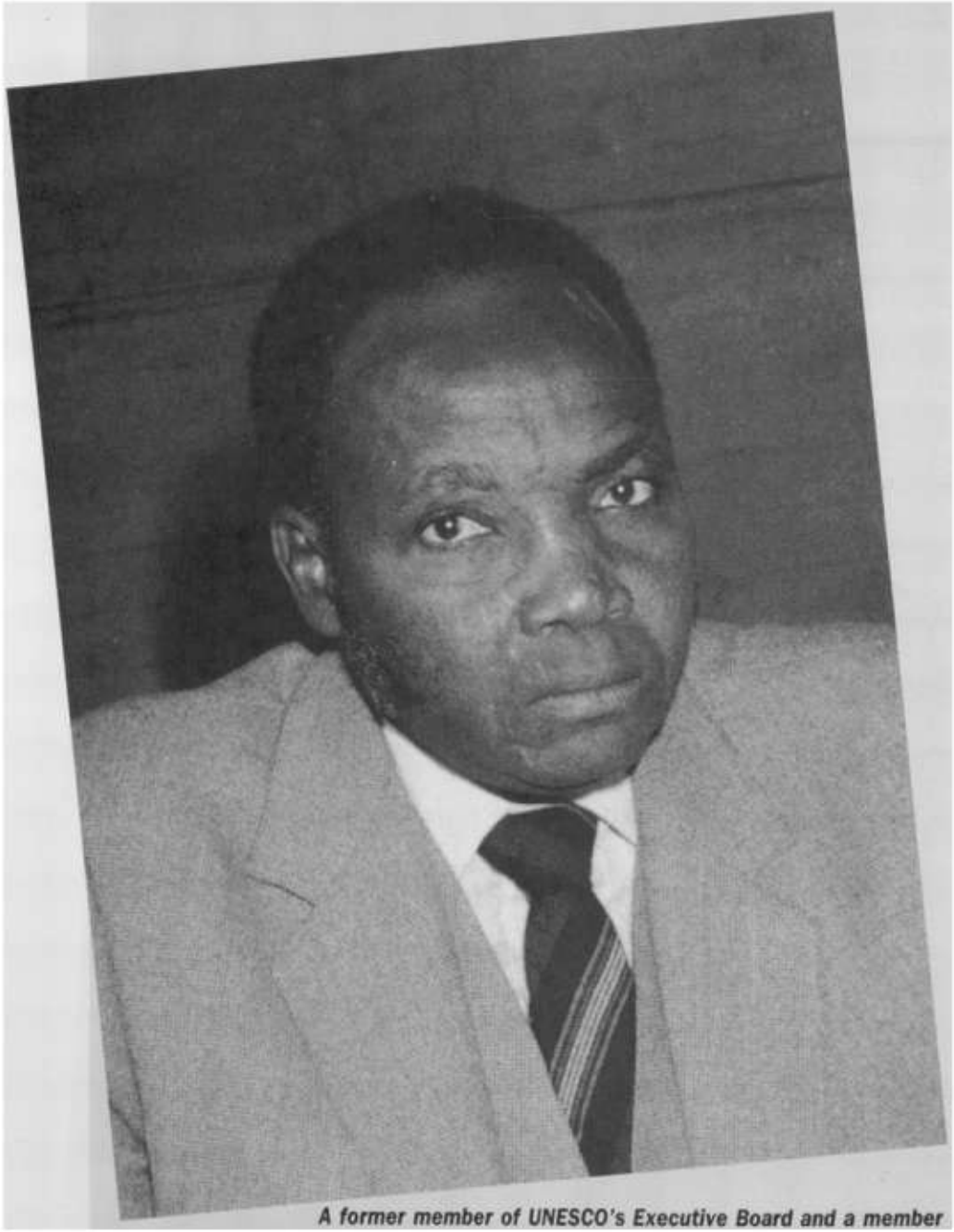
■ Pope John Paul II visits UNESCO headquarters in Paris. In his address he says, "Yes, the future of mankind depends on culture! Yes, world peace depends on the *primacy of the Spirit!* Yes, the peaceful future of mankind depends on *love!* Your contribution . . . is vital. It consists in adopting the correct approach to the problems with which you have to wrestle. My final word is this: Do not abandon the struggle! Continue it without ceasing!"
■ A series of conferences on Islam, philosophy and the sciences are held in Paris.

Left, inauguration of the monuments of the island of Philae (Egypt) after they had been transferred to a new site.
Above: Bhutan's radio service, which went on the air in the 1970s, has received aid from UNESCO in the framework of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

TO BE CONTINUED

JOSEPH KI-ZERBO

talks to Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat



A former member of UNESCO's Executive Board and a member of the Council of the United Nations University, Joseph Ki-Zerbo has an international reputation as a historian of Africa. He is the author of many articles and books, including a history of black Africa (1972) that has been translated into eight languages, and was editor of volume 1 of UNESCO's General History of Africa (1981)*. In 1990 he published Educate or Perish (UNESCO/UNICEF, L'Harmattan, Paris,). In this interview he corrects some widespread misconceptions about African history.

* Co-published with Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., United Kingdom, and the University of California Press, Berkeley, U.S.A.

■ *You have been one of the architects of UNESCO's monumental* General History of Africa *project. How does writing the history of Africa differ from writing the history of other continents?*

— Historians all over the world perform virtually the same social function. Their mental processes and methods are generally similar. But insofar as the subject being studied is somewhat different in Africa, then the logic they follow and the methodological principles they employ must be adapted. Some principles and criteria have to be redefined to fit into the African context.

We also have to take into account the methods developed by those who performed the historian's function in our precolonial societies. One can't just forget them and say, as has been done in the past, that "there is no African philosophy since there were no philosophers before the ones who were trained at the Sorbonne." That is the wrong way of looking at the problem.

Precolonial African historians at least tried to situate man in time, even if they did not always succeed in doing so. On the other hand we should not go to the other extreme of claiming we are so different from the rest of the world that we must adopt different mathematical or scientific principles from theirs! The fact is that it is impossible to grasp our situation simply by importing knowledge as it has been developed in the West.

Let me give you two examples of what I mean. The first concerns the oral tradition as a historical source. During work sessions organized at UNESCO in connection with the History of Africa project, we had an opportunity to give due regard to this source which Europeans had tended to consider as irrational. We showed that it *could* be a rational tool with which to study history. In return this has also influenced historical research in the European countries themselves. A proof that the intellectual flow is not just one-way. . . .

The second example concerns traditional

A democracy based on the constitutional solidarity of the African system could make Africa a credible member of a new planetary partnership.

African medicines, which are also a subject of historical research. African medicine has stressed the importance of some principles, such as the psychosomatic effects of certain substances, which Western countries have tended to neglect. In other words African countries contain reserves of rationality, of logical principles, which might well open up new horizons in various fields of knowledge. That, in my opinion, is the right approach. Let's take from Europe but let's give something back in return. To say that we must start from scratch would be to accept a kind of mental apartheid.

■ *Let's get back to the oral tradition. Hampâté Bâ used to say that when an old man dies in Africa, a library disappears. What is the precise value of the oral tradition as a historical source?*

— There are a substantial number of oral texts, but they have been neglected because the history of Africa was for centuries viewed exclusively from the outside. And yet they are extremely valuable because they come from within Africa. Of course they need to be carefully sifted and subjected to critical analysis before they can be considered as credible evidence.

The oral tradition takes different forms. The most sophisticated form, and the one closest to written documents, is what is known as the institutionalized or formalized text. In some cases, monarchical and dynastic structures have existed in Africa for 500 or a thousand years. In these cases, a body of State functionaries with the responsibility of administering the collective memory gradually came to be established. Sometimes they were known as griots; in Mali they were called *dyeli;* elsewhere they had other names. But these griots had nothing in common with the "griots" who pander to the modern tourists' appetite for the exotic. They were State functionaries.

Thus, among the Moose, in Burkina Faso, in Mali, or in the kingdom of Abomey, what is now Benin, there were organized corporations which were responsible for managing the collective memory. The members of these corporations were trained in specific places, each of which had its own traditions. In these places masters taught their pupils a curriculum that took several years to complete. This process had to be followed before the student could become a full member of the corps of griots. All this is well described in Djibril Tamsir Niane's book about the western Sudan.

In these cases, we can be sure that the process of transmission was correct. Even so, the content must be subjected to a series of internal and external analyses to check its consistency. If, for example, two warring peoples give the same version of the same battle, there is a strong likelihood that the version is accurate. If a vanquished people admits in its oral tradition that it has been defeated, there are also good grounds for believing that such a defeat actually took place. On the other hand, conflicts between rival princes jockeying for power within the same society may give rise to different versions, special oral traditions. In such a case the different accounts can be compared in the same way as written documents. Comparison makes it possible to reach a hypothesis that can be labelled "certain", "probable" or "possible", as the case may be. The oral tradition is subjected to precisely this kind of eminently rational criticism.

To give you an idea of just how reliable these texts may be, in the land of the Moose, in Burkina Faso, the head griot had to recite the genealogical list of the "Mogho-Naaba" every day! It was out of the question that he should forget it. This knowledge was passed on, for the head griot practiced his craft until he died or was removed from office. Each day he had to make this connection with the past. And he trembled as he did so, for the slightest error could cost him his life. If he forgot a name or wrongly attributed an act to someone who had not performed it, he was immediately taken to task by his audience, who acted as a vigilant jury and guaranteed the accuracy of what he said. Exactly the same thing happened at the court of the king of Abomey.

Other traditions were less explicit, less stereotyped. One example is the "Sundiata fasa"—the history or eulogy of Sundiata, a hero from the early history of Mali in the thirteenth century. We know about him from other, Arab sources, especially from Ibn Battuta, who visited Mali in the fourteenth century. The cycle describes a cluster of events that evoke certain economic, social, political and religious structures. The stories are chanted to the accompaniment of instruments kept specially for the purpose. They may seem epic and purely legendary, but in some cases they are corroborated by the written documents. In fact sometimes they flesh out or even correct the written record.

■ *What was the relationship with time? Was there a single notion of time, or several? One gets the impression that tribal time is cyclical, made up of endless renewals, all linked to a cosmogonic overview. Yet you have been talking of dynasties and successions. How are these two concepts of time linked?*

— I think that in the African system the two are combined. The cyclical aspect is very important, especially in agrarian societies. Not that these societies lacked either leaders or State structures. Each one had a government and its own administrative conventions. Nevertheless, these were peasant societies subjected to a cyclical rhythm. But even in them, there is reason to believe that people were not enmeshed in a process of eternal recurrence which is implicit in certain philosophies that accept the idea of reincarnation.

Take this episode from an African cosmogony, which was quoted by the late Hampâté Bâ: "God created man in order to have an interlocutor, a companion with whom to speak." These words, and the status they accord to mankind, imply that our role is not merely to go on repeating the same actions. That is the message of the African version of the Prometheus myth, according to which

A mural decoration by the South African artist Johanna Mkwebani in the KwaNdebele bantustan.

God invented fire to warm his mother, then man discovered the fire and carried it off. Thus began an epic chase between God and man, which lasted until the day God stopped and saw in man his equal and his brother. Such is the grandeur of the human condition.

To return to the conception of time, Africans say that tomorrow must be better than today and claim that those who have lived longer possess more wisdom and knowledge. In medicine, for example, anyone who inherits knowledge is expected to add something new himself. So the idea of an accumulation of knowledge is to some extent accepted, but it serves the common good and not just the individual—this is very important. This was both a great strength and a weakness of the African system.

■ *The idea of accumulation as a community-based concept brings us to the idea of change. How was change regarded? Was it controlled? Despised? Feared?*

— It has often been said that the African only repeats what his ancestors did. This is one principle, but it is not the only one. It is reductionist to limit Africans to this dimension. In Africa there has been change as well as continuity.

The first thing to remember is that all Africans do not have the same social situation. Some people maintain that there were no social classes in Africa, others say that even if there were, they did not radically call social structures in question. This is to some extent true, for we have not reached the stage of industrial capitalism—even though we helped it to become established in Europe! Nevertheless, differences of status have existed, and consequently conflicts which could generate certain kinds of change.

Let me give you two examples from African history. The first is that of Biton Kulubali, king of Ségou. He owes his importance to the fact that he introduced a personal tax. He also created a professional army, which had not existed before, and a collegial system of leadership. This is a specific case of a transition due to the inventiveness and creativity of a leader who was literally an initiator of history.

The other example, that of Shaka, is better known. The rise of Shaka was an amazing phenomenon that changed the destiny of entire peoples in southern Africa, by amalgamating them into the Zulu nation. There was a concept of nationhood. Some people have talked in terms of a "pre-nation", but there were real nations, even if they did not have all the attributes or external signs of nationhood that existed in Western countries—although even in the West nationhood developed at different times in different countries and regions.

Shaka gave a common name to all those who had been brought together by war and conquest. He transformed the army by changing its weapons, turning it into a body equipped only with hand-arms for hand-to-hand fighting. Later he introduced a strategic system based on age. The youngest soldiers were posted in the vanguard and on the flanks so that they could attack and envelop the enemy. Behind them were the men of mature years who bore the brunt of the main shock. The oldest waited in the rear, ready to carry out other missions if necessary. This was the "buffalo-head" order of battle whereby Shaka revolutionized the art of war. Unfortunately, he ended up as a dictator.

Even so, Africans felt an almost visceral attachment to the past, and this was linked to the oral tradition. In countries where history is a matter of books, written documents and archives, there is a kind of distance, a detachment from the past. In Africa, however, people remained so closely bound to the spoken tradition with its cargo of familiar names that history tended to be transmuted into common property, proclaimed and reproclaimed from generation to generation.

■ *Is it possible to pinpoint a moment that saw the emergence of an African consciousness, transcending not only the consciousness of tribes and clans but that of States and empires? Was the shock caused by the slave trade a moment of this type?*

— Objectively, yes. I would say that there was a continent-wide dawning of awareness, in the sense that almost all African societies at the time of the slave trade shared a feeling of alienation, of self-deprivation. But how can one talk of a subjective pan-African conscience? How could it be propagated and diffused? You must bear in mind the immensity of the continent and the natural obstacles within it. The miraculous thing is that truly pan-African elements did eventually emerge and coalesce in spite of these barriers.

When I first went to Northern Rhodesia, what is now Zambia, one evening I heard through the window of my hotel room a tom-tom rhythm from a distant part of the city that was exactly the same as that of my home village—so much so that I started dancing! There definitely are elements of unity.

But let me get back to the natural obstacles, which were for long virtually impassable. The great equatorial forest, for example, might have been a melting pot of social innovations and technologies, but it was an obstacle all the same. The Sahara too was a barrier that filtered and slowed down communication. All of which meant that the dawning of pan-African awareness was bound to be a slow process. In other words, even if all Africans felt the same thing at the same time, this common sentiment could not be transformed into a collective desire to take action. Not to mention the internal contradictions—that some Africans were set against others, by encouraging ethnic conflicts and in other ways.

■ *As a historian of Africa, what is your aim today? Is it just to carry out research and then to analyse what happened in the past? Or do you want to draw conclusions, find lessons for the future?*

— The answer to this question is immense. On

the one hand there is the problem of the historian's craft. On the other, the idea that peoples have of history. And thirdly, the distinction to be made between real history as it unfolded and the history we try to reconstitute: the representation of history as fashioned by historians.

First of all I should like to make a distinction between the journalist and the historian. I'm thinking of what is called instant history. Communications today are so rapid that historians feel swept along by the demand and the need to describe immediately events that have just happened. Popular works of instant history appear a matter of months, sometimes just weeks, after the events they describe. This kind of history is next door to journalism. But the historian should be distinguished from the journalist by a concern for the long term, by the fact that he takes into consideration a spell of time sufficient to indicate sustained continuities and trends in events or structures—in short, a landscape beyond the present.

This concept of extent in time, not to say in space, is one of the distinguishing elements. There is also the matter of whether one is confined to the surface of events, to the waves splashing before one's eyes, or whether one is examining the deeper currents, the substructures that explain the waves. This is the well-known distinction between the Annales school of historians and others concerned with the history of events.

But it is also important to emphasize that the historian is not independent of his or her society. He responds to its needs, and even if the latter seem subjective or personal they still have a social dimension. The historian has not dropped from the clouds. He belongs to a many-faceted social context that leaves its imprint on him, if only through his genetic inheritance. The historian is not a kind of independent judge dealing in abstractions. He is more or less implicated, if not committed, in what he describes.

There was a time when historians had to fulfill social obligations, such as passing on the genealogy of kings or teaching princes ethics via examples from the past, which is why royal tutors in Europe at a certain period were usually historians. Then came the development of nationhood, which produced historians who primarily stressed the events or the men that created the nation-state.

Now we are living in a period that concerns itself with structures, sometimes on their own, sometimes in combination with ideologies. It was the Annales school, and my teacher Fernand Braudel, that really opened up this new space, this intellectual galaxy, to history.

I must say that the African historian can really spread his wings here because of the durability of the structures in our civilizations.

A reconstruction of Ethiopia's Lower Omo valley as it might have appeared 2 million years ago, based on palaeontological research.

One finds things which have not changed for centuries, or which repeat themselves as they were a hundred years ago. Over twenty years ago I attended the enthronement of the *moro naaba*. His grandson was enthroned recently, and the sacred ritual was the same. But please note that durability is not the same as immobility. The structures are never entirely fixed. Things move, eventually. The important thing is to analyse African realities in depth, to X-ray the combination of factors which introduces a process of mutation into a permanent structure.

■ *You have talked throughout this interview of permanence and enduring structures, but also of new departures and changes. African society seems to be a mixture of the two. But it is also clear that in the modern world, with colonization and what has followed, the processes of change have been accelerating. In your opinion, what is the most important change? What is happening to communities that were once based on permanence but have been profoundly shaken in the last century? How has the perception of African society been transformed?*

— There have been at the same time astonishing elements of continuity and also rapid movements forward. Sometimes the latter have been purposeless, mere aimless avalanches, what's more, because they have

been non-indigenous, brought in from the outside. I think the period of the slave trade can be considered as a haemorrhage which undermined and exhausted the biological and social forces of Africa.

But the fundamental change was colonization. Colonization was a major amputation. It was a brutal separation that cut its victims off from many essential things. It was an enforced divorce from their own history, the social structure they knew, their organized civic identity: their society's particular way of organizing space, the use of its language in the main public places . . . in short an ethnocide punctuated by occasional genocides.

But out of this change, new things developed: colonization, through a kind of dialectic, made it possible to accomplish certain things in Africa. For example, it created large spaces containing numbers of communities and established, sometimes by means of massacres, a peace within them that recalled the ancient "Pax Romana". But Africans did not lose their creativity under colonization, whatever some colonial historians might have claimed—hence the importance of an African history viewed from within. In reality, many supposedly "static" and passive societies kept alive, developing processes that often led to protest or even insurrection, until the Second World War.

■ *But this creativity, since the end of colonization, hasn't merely sought to rediscover the rhythm of the past. It also inevitably seeks to innovate, to invent a future that isn't just a repetition of what's gone before. . . .*

— Actually, the strategies of resistance have often been similar in the colonial and the post-colonial periods, for example in what is now known as the "informal" sector of the economy. The struggle for identity and autonomy, which must not be confused with a pig-headed rejection of change, has taken a multitude of forms, the most obvious being armed resistance. But even reputedly docile leaders, called on to send their children to the white man's school, often preferred to substitute the sons of their servants in order to cut off their children from the foreign system. Young people called up for military service or forced labour got out of it by migrating or even by mutilating themselves.

As for religion, even in our own day it is a bastion of resistance to the powers-that-be. Africans have shown an audacious willingness to reinterpret faiths, to blend elements of Christianity or Islam with traditional beliefs and customs. Some marabouts, under cover of inculcating a work-mystique in their pupils, have become successful producers of cash crops. African traders have used their own methods and connections to seize market share in the trade in colonial products. Traditional healers have modernized the packaging of their products, even the preparations they sell. Rejecting imported legal codes, peasant cadres have revived working groups based on the old tribal age-groups. Herdsmen who have always worked more or less without the idea of profit have sold their animals on the market.

But overall, in comparison with Asians for example, the Africans adapt little and adopt much. And for good reason. When you have no autonomous industrial sector, the creative imagination has limited room for manoeuvre. . . .

■ *The last few years have seen young people rising in the name of liberty and democracy, and some have been willing to die for these ideas. Who are they? Where do they come from?*

— These splendid young people are the fruit of a long-standing system of disagregation. They have been doubly trapped. Uprooted by the potent influence of an exogenous school system and by radio and television series pouring out from the North, they have become cut off from the African system of rights and responsibilities. They are simultaneously free and slaves; for they are entering the modern market-place with tiny purchasing power but an enormous appetite, whetted by the media. Confronting them are dictators who are often far less educated than they are, but who have power and possessions. . . . For these young people, the past is blind, the present is dumb and the future is deaf.

In these conditions, the youth bomb is bound to explode. The dictatorships don't create jobs, except for policemen or torturers, whose targets are these same young people.

But democracy is a delusion, a placebo, if it is only a matter of outward forms. A multi-party system is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. If other structural conditions are not met, democracy is reduced to a skeleton, a text without a context. Without the flesh of a certain amount of development and the blood of a minimum level of democratic culture, there is a risk of falling into the bitter disappointments that followed independence and the blind race for economic growth.

Where are the programmes and social projects of the hundreds of political parties that have mushroomed in Africa in the last few years? Now that communism, which was humanistic in theory but in fact crushed the populations who came under its sway, is on the way out, and capitalism is revealing its many structural weaknesses, has the African system really got nothing to offer? To take one example, by what kind of social security system have Africans hitherto managed to look after their children, their sick and their old?

That is a form of constitutional solidarity that may be a new boundary of civilization, if civilization hopes to advance beyond today's barbarian and suicidal selfishness. A democracy based on that spirit of solidarity could make Africa a credible member of a new planetary partnership. . . . On condition that another equally essential precondition is met: the integration of Africa, which alone can give us access to major industries, that is the capacity to harness our economy to a new set of values marrying the best from elsewhere to the finest fruits of our own history. ■

EDITORIAL

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
Article 1.

RACISM has deep roots in human history. It emerges wherever groups of people in situations of conflict defend their freedom and their culture without respecting those of others, set themselves apart, isolate themselves and attack one another in the name of ethnic criteria. It speaks a language of exclusion, which leads naturally to contempt and even hatred.

Institutionalized racism is a variant which is particularly odious because it attempts to justify the business of enslavement in terms of a philosophical and legal terminology which pretends to be "civilized". I am thinking here of the slave trade, which bled Africa so that the cotton fields of the Americas could bloom; and also of Nazism, which brought devastation to Europe for the greater glory of the purported Aryan race.

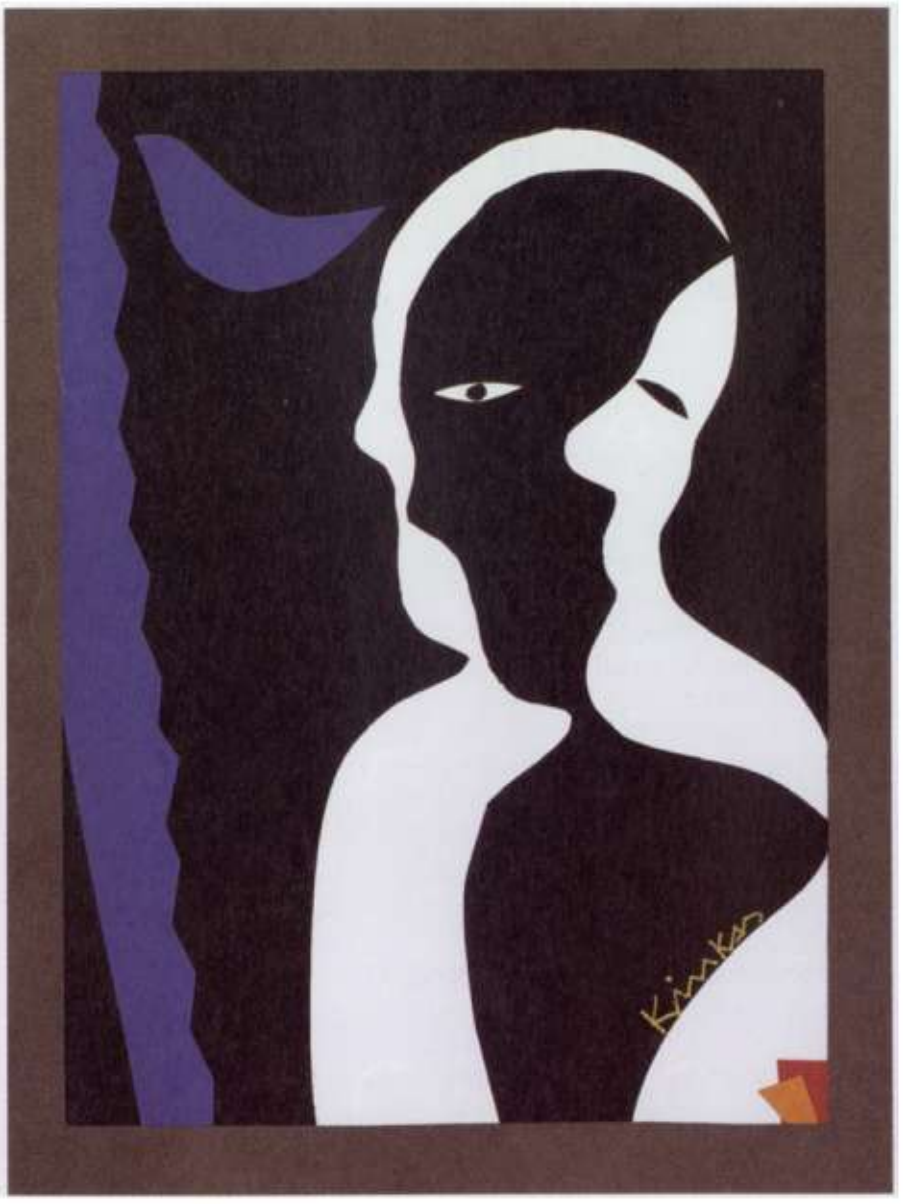
During the Second World War, racism was unleashed in all its murderous folly. The conflict was brought to an end thanks to the mobilization of the forces of freedom throughout the world and to a growing realization of the danger this new form of barbarism represented for humanity. The United Nations system was itself an offspring of this new awareness. As the preamble to UNESCO's constitution declares, "the great and terrible war which has now ended was a war made possible by the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men, and by the propagation, in their place, . . . of the doctrine of the inequality of men and races".

However, this doctrine was soon to reappear in the shape of apartheid. A challenge to the universal values of human rights, it was able to survive for almost half a century with the help of external complicities and reprehensible self-serving. But now the pillars of apartheid are crumbling in their turn, beneath the blows of those who have fought and are fighting for freedom in South Africa, in a world context in which democratic values are finally coming into their own.

For all those who, since the Second World War, have fought unceasingly against racism, this represents a great victory for freedom. It is also a clarion-call to pursue with increased confidence the struggle against insidious new forms of racism that appear in the everyday life of societies in the North and the South alike whenever people find it impossible to resolve their differences in a spirit of mutual respect.

Only education brings freedom. It alone nourishes the roots of behaviour and shapes attitudes of tolerance and solidarity. Only education in the love of others will one day lead to dialogue between cultures and enable all the people of the Earth to live together in peace. May that day come soon.

Federico Mayor
Director-General of UNESCO



A paper cut-out illustration by the Brazilian artist Kinkas, specially commissioned for this issue of the *UNESCO Courier*.

The making of a tragedy

by Macadou Ndiaye

From the arrival of the first Dutch settlers to the beginnings of apartheid

On 6 April 1652, after an exhausting voyage, about one hundred men disembarked from Dutch ships in Table Bay, the old name for the area around the Cape of Good Hope. Their leader was one Jan van Riebeeck, who had been instructed by the Dutch East India Company to establish a revictualling base for Company boats en route for India.

Five years earlier, one such vessel had come to grief in the same bay. The crew survived the wreck, and it was they who had suggested that a port of call be set up at the Cape. They were encouraged to do so by the reputed hospitality of the Khoi, skilled herdsmen who inhabited the region.

Portuguese navigators had landed on the southern shores of the African continent two centuries earlier. In 1487 Bartolomeu Dias had rounded the Cape and reached as far as Mossel Bay. Ten years later, Vasco da Gama disembarked on the coast of Natal, which received its name from him.

Unlike the Spanish guilds and the chartered companies that financed the Habsburgs' wars during the reigns of Charles V and Philip II, the East India Company was a truly capitalist institution. It was less interested in people than in the profits it could extract from its operations. From 1656 on, it granted certificates of free enterprise, while retaining for itself a monopoly on purchase and the right to fix the price of wheat, cattle and vegetables.

Meanwhile, the numbers of the small Dutch colony were swollen by the arrival of French Huguenots, driven from their home country by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Van Riebeeck's own wife was a French Protestant.

For these Crusaders of another age, fleeing religious persecution in Europe, the fertile African lands were manna from Heaven, a gift of Providence, a promised land. Even their attitude towards the Company began to change. With the granting of independent estates, they gradually distanced themselves from it.

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The colonists called themselves *burghers* or citizens, but were to go down in history as *boers*, Dutch for "peasants". Their dealings with the indigenous peoples initially centred on cattle-trading, but as their numbers grew they soon came into conflict with the Hottentots. They organized offensive and defensive raids, in the course of which they seized rich pasturelands.

The struggle against the African tribes gradually bound this little colony of uprooted individuals into a separate ethnic community, linked by a common, Calvinist creed. The Boers also developed their own language, Afrikaans, derived from Dutch.

The Boers became tough, hard-working crusaders, firmly convinced that they were a chosen people superior to the "godless" indigenous peoples they called Kaffirs. They based their faith on three pillars: the Bible, the wagon and the whip. From 1657 on, they gradually reduced the Khoi to servitude, despite fierce resistance, notably under Chief Austshumayo.

The East India Company ceased to exist in 1795. The Boers, who by then numbered 16,000, saw themselves as a race apart. But they were soon to come into conflict with two enemies: the British, who had recently bought Cape Colony from the Dutch for £6 million, and the Africans, in particular the redoubtable Zulus, with whom they were soon to come into contact.

Relations with the Hottentots degenerated, with disputes over cattle thefts escalating sporadically into open confrontation. Travelling in ox-drawn wagons that they used to form defensive circles, the Boers launched expeditions against the Africans, some of whom were reduced to slavery after being defeated in battle.

Boer nationalism versus British imperialism

A community of Moravian Brothers settled at Genadenstad in 1792, and from then on there was a British presence on the Cape. The London Missionary Society also sent envoys. Under the influence of the missionaries, the British governor at the Cape promulgated laws from 1806 on that enabled black people to take their Boer masters to court.

These measures aroused the opposition of the Boer colonists, who saw them as acts of hostility that both damaged their interests and offended against their sense of superiority with regard to the Africans. However, the British grip on the colony tightened, and in 1828 English became the official language of Cape Colony. Six years later, slavery was abolished and raids against the Hottentots were prohibited.

Opposite page: in the late 15th century, the Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias became the first European to round the tip of Africa and sail up the continent's eastern coast. To commemorate Dias's expedition, his arrival at Mossel Bay (South Africa) was re-enacted in 1988. Below: a scene from a South African television series entitled *Shaka Zulu* (1986), which told the story of the 19th-century warrior king who was the founding father of the Zulu nation.

To escape British domination, the Boers began in 1835 an arduous journey through the arid interior of the country that took them from the Cape to the lands of the Transvaal and the Orange River. For these Protestant farmers, steeped in the Bible and brought up on memories of persecution in Europe, the Great Trek through lands inhabited by people they considered savage and hostile recalled the Exodus of the Old Testament Hebrews, which the Boers were to evoke as a veritable national foundation myth. The Trek indelibly marked the image and the destiny of the Afrikaners.

One claim often made by the apologists of apartheid is that those who took part in the Great Trek—the Voortrekkers—found unoccupied, virgin land on their arrival. In fact in the course of their migration they came up against the Xhosa, who barred their route. They were then obliged to divert northwards, where they found themselves confronted by the Zulus, a formidable warrior race, under their chief Dingaan, brother of the celebrated Shaka.

At first the Boers were received in peace; Dingaan declared that there was enough land for everybody. The Boer settlers thus had free run of the pastures. But they immediately set up fences and barbed wire to mark off "their" land, thereby denying the indigenous herdsmen the right of free passage that had been customary for generations. For the proud Zulu warriors, who had no sense of private property, this was a betrayal of the spirit of hospitality that lay behind the agreement between the two peoples. Dingaan subsequently lured the Boer colonists to his *kraal*—the Afrikaans word for an indigenous village—and in 1838 massacred many of them.

This episode, regarded by the Boers as an act of treachery, left them with an enduring hatred and fear of the Zulus. Dingaan was defeated later in 1838 at the Battle of Blood River, commemorated as a day of celebration by the Boers but regarded as a tragedy by the Africans. Even so the Zulus continued the struggle, especially against the British who now arrived in their thousands. France's Prince Imperial, the son of Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie, was killed while serving with the British Army in the course of one such battle.

The Boers then founded two small republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, in which they first reduced the indigenous peoples to slavery and then established the principles of apartheid, the rigorous separation of races. The northern Sotho peoples under Moshoeshoe and their southern counterparts under Sekhukhuni rose en masse against the Boers, and never submitted to their domination.

The discovery of diamonds at Kimberley in 1867 and of gold in the Transvaal attracted thousands of European adventurers, many of them British, who stirred up trouble for the Boers. Cecil Rhodes, the founder of Rhodesia, was among them. Financial interests underlay the noble, humanitarian motives put forward by the British as reasons for liberating their compatriots and the Africans from the Boer yoke.

The British concentrated around the Boer republics a formidable expeditionary force of some 20,000 men, including many Africans, who had been promised recognition of their rights. The Boers were defeated, and signed the Peace

Above left: *Paul Kruger* (1989), a sculpture of velvet corkwood, enamel paint and nails by South African artist Phuthuma Seoka that evokes the famous Boer leader. This work, and those reproduced on pages 23, 28, 33 and 38, featured in *Art from South Africa*, a travelling exhibition organized by the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (UK), in association with the Zabalaza Festival, London.
Left, beneath a more conventional statue of Kruger in the centre of Pretoria, Afrikaners demonstrate in February 1990 against the liberation of Nelson Mandela. Opposite page: an Afrikaner and a Bantu photographed in the 1940s.

of Vereeniging in 1902. Their republics were henceforth subject to the British crown.

The birth of the Afrikaner nation

In Europe, the course of the Boer War was followed with great interest, and the defeat of the Afrikaners aroused a certain amount of pity. Paul Kruger, the President of the Transvaal, took refuge in Switzerland and strove to sensitize European public opinion to the misfortunes of what he depicted as a brave and hardy race of pioneers that had developed savage lands where the spirit of darkness reigned. The Boers began to build up a store of public sympathy, as the unfortunate victims of persecution at the hands of perfidious Albion, that has survived in the collective unconscious of Western public opinion to our own day.

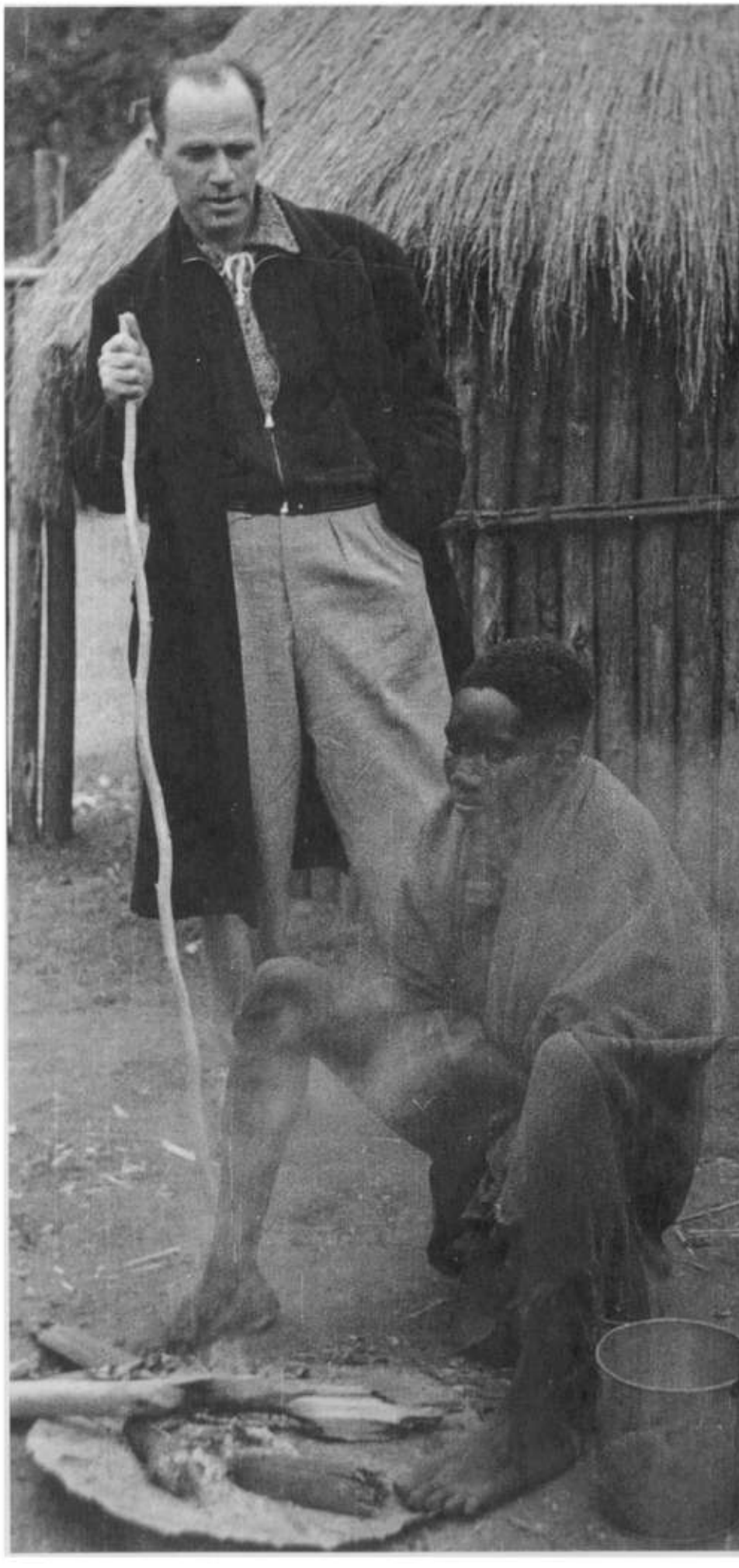
In fact the Afrikaners of the late nineteenth century had little in common with the early colonists of East India Company days. Living in Africa had changed their mentality. They had remained isolated from the great currents of thought favouring liberty, social justice and the sovereignty of peoples that, in the wake of the French Revolution, had illuminated the history of nineteenth-century Europe. They were hostile to any idea of progress. Their economy was rural and backward, and they regarded Africans as inferior beings, to be kept at all costs in ignorance.

For the British, who stood for capitalism based on salaried work, the system of racial segregation practiced by the Boers belonged to the economy of another age. Britain, in full economic expansion, looked primarily to the formidable, undeveloped industrial potential of South Africa—"a veritable geological scandal". The British Empire was then at its peak, and it was less preoccupied with humanitarian considerations than with economic interests.

So the British reneged on the promise of political rights for Africans made at the time of the Boer War. On the other hand, they accepted the Afrikaners as British subjects.

Far from putting an end to the injustices of which the Africans were the victims, British domination only made them worse. Rampant segregation between blacks and whites was established, first of all in economic matters; by a series of iniquitous laws and directives, the whites took the best lands and introduced increasingly draconian legislation to permit the compulsory exploitation of the black workforce.

Finally, the victory of the Nationalist Party in the 1949 elections and the end of political dominance by groups depending largely for their support on English-speaking voters brought to power the hard-core champions of the system of racial segregation known as apartheid. ■



A return to South Africa

by Ruth Lazarus

An expatriate's eyewitness account of a country in the throes of change

An absence of twenty-five years from one's country of origin is a long time: and on returning to it on a visit, as I did recently, one would naturally expect to find changes. But to return to South Africa at this point in time is to witness a country that is undergoing particularly profound and dramatic changes.

The dismantling of apartheid has begun and the process is, I believe, irreversible. The last few years have seen a new willingness on the part of the Government to review many of the apartheid laws and to work together with the national movements towards a new democratic constitution and full franchise for everyone regardless of ethnic origin. This process began in 1982 and accelerated when President de Klerk took office in 1989. "One person one vote", long the dream of all non-whites, is now a possibility in the foreseeable future.

Talk of the "new South Africa" is on everyone's lips, but the expression often means different things to different people, depending on their origins, colour and political bias.

Some changes are very noticeable to the visitor. Petty apartheid is disappearing, people of different ethnic origins are now seen together, and there are no separate queues in shops, at bus stops or in banks. Schools (in theory at least) are now desegregated. But the vast majority of blacks cannot afford to send their children to the better schools, and they are still dependent on "Bantu Education", an inferior and inadequate primary school system. Many of the blacks are, in fact, not in school at all.

More important, all political parties, national movements and black trade unions are now legal, and many—although not all—political prisoners have been released. The old and hated "Pass system", controlling freedom of movement for blacks, has been abolished.

There is, in general, a greater recognition among the white population of the legitimate rights of blacks and other oppressed groups to equality in social and political life. Television and radio programmes are much freer. However, at least one third of the whites (the conservative Afrikaners) rigorously oppose these changes, and some have already formed a "state within a state"

Below, the Khayelitsha township outside Cape Town, to which black South African families were sent after the demolition of squatter camps. Below right: a house in a residential district of Cape Town.

called Orangia in the Western Cape, to maintain their segregated lives. I also suspect that the majority of whites would still wish, and expect, to maintain their economic supremacy.

During the last twenty years there has also been an unprecedented exodus of highly skilled and professional whites (doctors, lawyers, accountants, etc.), most of whom have settled in Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. This exodus still continues, and might well grow during what many of them consider to be the uncertain years of the future. The motivation varies, but many oppose the new wave of change and fear for their privileged economic position.

Many of the old structures still remain

Yet despite these changes, the apartheid structures are at present still very much in place. The right to vote is still the privilege of the whites. Residential apartheid is still entrenched. A high proportion of the whites live in beautiful homes with swimming pools and large gardens in the richer residential suburbs of the cities, fortified and bolted inside with their luxury possessions.

Meanwhile, the majority of blacks are still living in segregated, desolate townships, in the urban areas on the edges of the big cities, in very inferior houses or shacks, in overcrowded homes often lacking elementary urban amenities, such as sanitation or electricity. Rural conditions are even worse. These inhuman surroundings are often a breeding ground for destabilizing elements, especially among the young. Law-abiding residents live in constant fear of having their few possessions stolen by marauding bands of delinquents and socially deprived gangs. In fact, the fear of being robbed or assaulted is felt in both the white and non-white communities, especially in Johannesburg (the largest city).

Economic apartheid is still perhaps the most blatant hangover from the past. Even though jobs are no longer exclusively reserved for whites, and trade unions for black workers are now legal, a very high proportion of office jobs and industrial jobs requiring technical skills are still held by whites and the overwhelming majority of unskilled, poorly paid jobs by the blacks. With unemployment on the increase, it is the black labour force which is most badly hit.

The present recession is, in fact, of such concern that the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Chris Stals, has stated that "poor economic growth, if continued at its present performance, will make the country ungovernable by 1995". He gave three reasons for this stagnation: "political uncertainties, social unrest and industrial action."

One of the biggest obstacles to change still lies in the distribution and ownership of land. In spite of the abolition in 1991 of the Group Areas Act, which dictated where people could live depending on their ethnic origin, and of the Land Acts (1919-1939), which reserved 87 per cent of the country's land for whites (although they currently make up less than 14 per cent of the population) there is as yet very little expectation that change will come soon and the problem remains grave. I saw little evidence of change, except in the city of Johannesburg, where the centre of town and adjoining residential districts have in recent years, despite these laws, become mixed areas. However, the overwhelming majority of the black population is still confined to the townships.

Despite the repealing of the land laws, land formerly expropriated from the blacks by forcible evacuation has not been returned, nor is its return included in any new legislation, and there are still 7 million squatters in temporary homes, mostly without sanitation or water.

The Reverend Frank Chikane, a well-known anti-apartheid activist, gives an example of what happened to his own family: "My mother who has owned land, and my father, now passed away, have been removed twice since the 1950s. The plot of land from which she was originally removed is still there. It is not owned privately by anybody: she has not been compensated for being removed . . . and when they say that the Land Act is going to be repealed, but is put under the free market system, everyone else can come and buy it, it means nothing to my mother. . . ."

Christopher S. Wren of the *New York Times* recently gave a vivid description of a shanty town: "In Soweto-by-the-Sea, near Port Elizabeth, the

RUTH LAZARUS
was born in South Africa and left the country in 1946. A former head of UNESCO's Literacy Activities Section, she is the author of many articles and studies on adult education and literacy.

ukuhlelelek (the marginal ones) live jammed into about 14,000 shacks built from corrugated metal, wooden packing cases, and whatever else can be scavenged. They overflow a squalid city without schools, hospitals, community centres, parks, sidewalks, or street lights. . . . Electricity, drainage, sewage systems and paved streets do not exist." And all this within a few kilometres of the luxurious houses of the rich.

Another area in which there is still discrimination is that of pensions and Government benefits for the disabled. These are still very inferior for blacks. Unemployment benefits for them hardly exist. Thus the sharp difference between the rich and the poor, broadly speaking between the whites and the blacks, is still very evident.

A sense of isolation

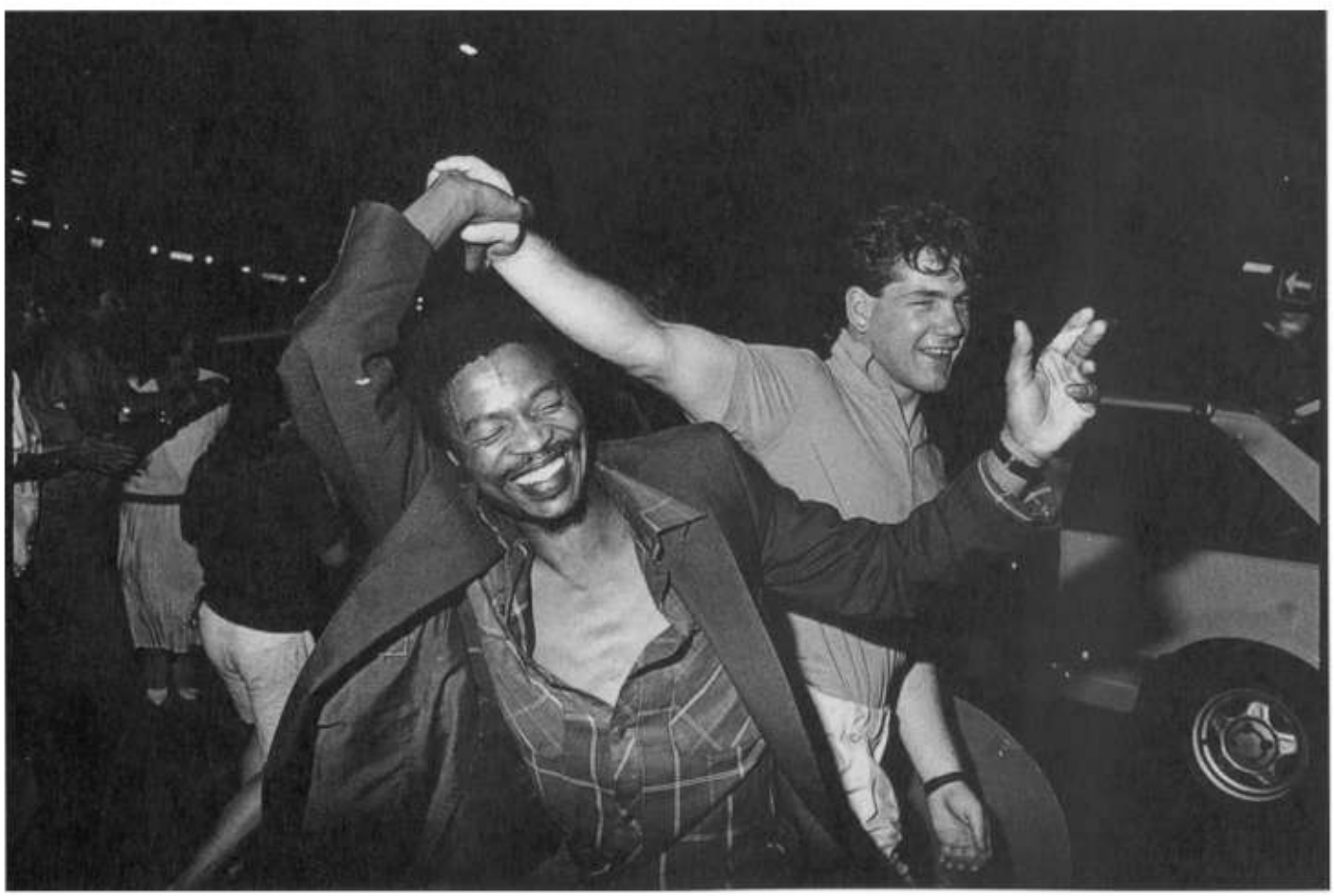
Another impression is of South Africa's continuing isolation from the rest of the world, both economically, culturally and in the domain of sport. The economic sanctions have been widely felt, although this is often denied by the authorities. The Government has not yet, despite the ongoing reforms, succeeded in attracting sufficient foreign capital to bolster a flagging economy. The cultural and sport boycott has also had a deep effect. Well-known artists have refused to perform in South Africa, and are still doing so. However, books and films which were censored in the past are now easily available.

The boycott that until recent months prevented South African sportsmen and women from participating in international sports events, notably the Olympics, and that discouraged internationally-known competitors from coming to South Africa, has had a devastating effect on South African sport. This has been deeply resented in white sporting circles. But changes are now in progress and slowly new sporting contacts with the outside world are taking place. The International Olympic Committee has, for instance, invited South Africa to the Barcelona Olympics.

The future

I came away with the feeling that "the new South Africa" is still for the overwhelming majority a hope rather than a reality. Nevertheless, in the coming months negotiations between the Government and the ANC and other national movements could lead to the creation of a constituent assembly, the drafting of a new constitution based on universal adult suffrage, and eventually the election of a fully democratic parliament based on a non-racial voters' roll.

South Africa's future is thus still in the balance. But the new freedoms gained will be rigorously defended, and there are hopeful signs that, if reason prevails over force, a new nation will emerge that could rightfully and proudly take its legitimate place among the other nations of the world. ■



New Year's Eve revelry on the streets of Hillbrow, in central Johannesburg.

Which model of democracy?

by Albie Sachs

A distinguished lawyer and anti-apartheid campaigner reflects on the democratic choices facing a non-racial South Africa

MODELS are enticing. Simplicity is difficult.

Democracy grows and withers in all continents, and nothing is gained by giving it a geographical genesis. We fight for it where we are, because it embodies the values we wish for ourselves, and not because we want to prove to anyone how good or civilized we are, or how worthy of aid.

It is for this reason that we in the South African anti-apartheid struggle resist the lure to say that we wish to install Western democracy in our country. We acknowledge without difficulty that the very word democracy has a Western origin, and that many of the institutions of democracy, such as periodic elections and the multi-party system, and much of its theorization, first emerged in Western countries. We are also not unaware of the fact that the West is so rich, well-armed and confident that prudence, if not opportunism, would suggest that we engage in the closest mimicry possible.

Yet much as we may like an idea, we may reject the wrapping within which it is presented. It is not a question of complexes or shallow pride, but of principle, of what is meant by democracy and how it is achieved in any part of the world.

The relationship of the West with our continent has in fact been far from democratic. First, African people were denied their physical autonomy through the slave trade and then had their legal personality negated by colonialism.

More recently in South Africa the whole panoply of racist laws which made up the system of apartheid emanated from a certain type of Western institution. The West might have transported railroads and the ballot to South Africa. It also brought hanging, the pass laws, States of Emergency and detention without trial, all sanctioned by Parliament and enforced by courts. At the international level, with the honourable exception of the Nordic countries, the Western countries traded with apartheid and largely turned their backs on those fighting for democracy.

In my lifetime, white-on-white violence in Europe has exceeded by far both in scope and savagery anything practiced by Africans against Africans in Africa; only four European countries have escaped military dictatorship or military occupation in the past half century. South Africa also has a long history of white on white violence, including the Anglo-Boer War, the 1922 miners' strike, the actions of pro-fascist groups in the 1930s, during the Second World War, and recently again.

***Leapin' to People's Culture*, a print by the South African artist Tiki Phungula.**

The ideas of democracy, peace and respect for human rights thus do not belong to any continent, and certainly not to any racial group. In South Africa, it was not people from Europe who fought most consistently for what is called Western Democracy, but people of African and

Asian origin. While the notion of racial dictatorship in more or less benign form was being extolled by white South Africans, the idea of non-racial democracy was kept alive in the prisons, the underground and exile by blacks. In the light of our history, nothing is gained by affixing the label Western to the word Democracy.

Does rejection of use of the term Western Democracy mean that we favour the formulation African Democracy? Not at all. We oppose Eurocentrism with universalism, rather than with any concept of African exceptionalism. On the whole, African democrats are not comfortable with the term African democracy. It is, of course, always necessary to emphasize that our country is South Africa and not South Europe. The suppression or marginalization of African languages, culture and history permeates every aspect of public and private life. In that sense, we have to Africanize, or better still, to South Africanize our society and its institutions.

Yet the term African democracy has been used to deny African people their individual rights as citizens and their fundamental freedoms as human beings. The eminently good African tradition of talking a matter through courteously and reasonably until consensus binding upon all is reached, has very often been turned around to justify the imposed consensus of one-person rule. Trade unions, political parties and other non-governmental organizations set up to advance the interests of the ordinary working people of Africa are outlawed on the grounds that they are supposedly un-African. Persons declare themselves to be President for life, on the model of an African king, though their rule has been legitimated neither by traditional royal lineage, nor by elections.

Any departure from internationally accepted standards of fair treatment is justified on the grounds that Africa is different—and there is no shortage of Europeans and North Americans willing to back dictators arguing that democracy is not for our part of the world. In our country, the greatest believers in special systems of African democracy have not been the African people, who overwhelmingly demanded universally accepted rights and freedoms, but the whites, who used the notion to impose corrupt Bantustan leaders on the majority.

Millions of victims of State neglect

The model of liberal democracy, on the other hand, has the virtue of being based on a concept rather than a continent. It emphasizes the aspects of personal freedom and political pluralism that are fundamental to democracy in any land, and places heavy emphasis on secure legal mechanisms to prevent abuses by the State. Yet in South Africa oppression takes the form not just of State interference but of State neglect. Millions die of malnutrition and tuberculosis, and go without homes and schools, because in the eyes of the

"The South Africans": portraits of a people by photographer Guy Hobbs.

Government as blacks they simply do not count. Political freedoms are empty and precarious if not associated with a dignified existence for all.

It is for this reason that we say we do not want freedom without bread, nor do we want bread without freedom, but rather, we want freedom, and we want bread.

Our fear is that many people who have either been bitterly anti-liberal all their lives, or who at best were only timidly liberal when it really mattered, will now seize upon liberal notions as a justification for what will amount to the privatization of misery. It is one thing to say that the State should not try to do what it does badly, namely produce and market goods, or to declare

that it should not attempt to monopolize completely the provision of public utilities and social services. It is quite another to imply that the State has no role at all to play in achieving equity and fairness in South Africa.

Social democracy—for and against

It is in this connection that social democracy has special appeal. Our understanding of social democracy is that it combines personal freedom and an active role for the market, with the guaranteeing of minimum rights of humane existence for all. Public authorities have an important responsibility for ensuring generalized access to health, education and housing. At the same time there are legal and public-opinion mechanisms for seeing to it that the State does not become too intrusive.

Yet impressive though the record of countries regarded as social-democratic might be, they simply do not provide constitutional models which respond to all the many problems facing us in South Africa. Most of these countries have an ancient history of nationhood, if not of statehood; we in South Africa have an insecure

history of statehood, and none at all of nationhood. Many of these countries happen to have monarchs as Heads of State, and Prime Ministers as Heads of Government; and, though we are undoubtedly not short of would-be Prime Ministers, we do not, as far as I am aware, even have pretenders to a throne.

Thus we need to make provision for the election of a President as Head of State, and, possibly, as Head of Government. For this technical reason, but for more substantive motives as well, we are moving away from a parliamentary-based concept of democracy to a constitutionally-based one. Parliament will continue to function as the central expression of the popular will, but it will exercise its powers within the framework of a nationally-agreed compact of fundamental rights and freedoms embodied in a judicially-supervised Bill of Rights.

None of this is incompatible with social democracy, yet the reality is that constitutions tend to play a relatively small role in the public life of the Social Democratic countries. In South Africa, the constitution will be a central document, serving both as a symbol and as a guarantor of freedom and security. Attractive though social democracy will continue to be as a political programme, its value as the foundation of a new constitution will be more limited.

Religious movements and the State

There are many countries in Europe and Latin America where Christian Democracy has received considerable support. In South Africa the concept is so remote that we do not even know what it is. Three-quarters of all South Africans regard themselves as Christians. Christianity is more than a religion, it has influenced the whole culture of our country. Yet important though Christianity is both to public and private life, any opportunistic attempt at this stage to establish exclusively Christian parties, and certainly any move to create constitutional privileges for Christianity, would be strongly resisted, and most vigorously by Christians themselves.

The fact is that there is no predominant Christian church, nor any distinctive political allegiance of Christians. The Dutch Reformed Church has long had an important role because of its association with the National Party Government, but it is divided, and is a minority church in the country as a whole. There are millions of Anglicans, Catholics and Methodists, an even larger number of members of independent African churches, and a growing body of pentecostals and evangelicals, all with divided political loyalties. Equally important, there are hundreds of thousands of Muslims, Jews and Hindus who would expect the same religious rights and freedoms as Christians.

Attempts made in previous years to run education on what were called Christian National lines have brought the notion of Christian domination of public life into disrepute. What is likely is a phase of active co-operation between the religious organizations and the State to achieve the objectives of the new Constitution, with the religious bodies retaining their right to bear witness and criticize the actions of the State. In the meanwhile Christians will be found in all the parties, as will non-Christians.

Until fairly recently, there was extensive backing amongst large sections of the anti-apartheid forces for the model of People's Democracy. The argument was twofold. In the first place it was contended that racist power was so intransigent and authoritarian that the only way to destroy it and guarantee rights to the people was through opposing it with the massed forces of people's power. Secondly, it was felt by many that liberal or social democracy converted the general population into passive recipients of rights who only became active in quinquennial bursts of electoral activity; representative democracy was important, it was argued, but it had to be supplemented by participatory democracy.

Today the notion of popular empowerment places less emphasis on the coercive capacity of the community, and more on the acquisition of skills, self-confidence and material means to enable communities to make effective decisions and take charge of their own destinies. More is said about people's rights and less about people's power.

The concept of democracy in itself involves government of the people, for the people, by the people. It is not necessary to say we want people's government of the people's people, for the people's people, of the people's people.

A plant nurtured by the sufferings and struggles of people everywhere

Accordingly, without identifying ourselves solely with any of the proffered models of democracy, we draw in different ways on each one of them, and prefer to speak simply not of Western, or African, or Liberal, or Christian, or Social or People's Democracy, but simply of . . . democracy.

Democracy in South Africa will look at the rich and varied experience of Western countries in overcoming the rich and varied forms of absolutism and tyranny which Western countries have thrown up over the centuries. It will pay special attention to the institutional mechanisms which have been created to guarantee basic rights, as well as to ways and means of encouraging a rights culture in society as a whole.

It will seek to ensure that in terms of language, symbols and personality it has a character that roots it in Africa. The fact that religion plays a big role in South African life will find appropriate acknowledgment in the Constitution, without creating a State religion or giving any religion preference over others; the hymn *Nkosi Sikelele iAfrika*, God Bless Africa, has already become a major force for national unity.

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South African lawyer and writer, is a member of the Constitutional Committee of the African National Congress. He is a professor at the University of the Western Cape and at the University of Cape Town, and Director of the South African Constitution Studies Centre of the Institute for Commonwealth Studies at the University of London. Notable among his published works are *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs* and *Protecting Human Rights in a New South Africa*. This text was prepared as a contribution to a Workshop on issues of human rights for a post-apartheid South Africa which was organized at Banjul, The Gambia (18-21 June 1991), by UNESCO and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights.

Black South Africans singing the anthem "God Bless Africa".

The institutional arrangements of the democratic State will owe much to the tenets of Liberal Democracy, while mechanisms to ensure basic rights of nutrition, housing, health and education will be influenced by Social Democracy. People's Democracy will live on not as a form of institutionalized power but as active civic involvement in the processes of transformation.

Above all, democracy in South Africa has to be anti-apartheid in character. It is for this reason that we speak of non-racial democracy. Our hope is that much as we draw on the experience of other countries in building democracy, so we make our own special contribution.

The first shall be the last, and the last shall be the first. We in South Africa are attempting three great historical and constitutional processes in one:

- collective self-determination, in overcoming the effects of colonial-type domination, and creating a single multi-lingual, multi-faith and pluri-political nation;
- individual self-determination, in guaranteeing personal rights and freedoms to all who live in our country;
- minimum rights of social welfare and a decent existence for all.

Where do these ideas come from? They come from ourselves and our own struggles. People establish the concept of justice in their imaginations and their hearts when they fight against injustice. The laws and the constitution then seek to confirm and institutionalize the rights which have been gained in battle. But in fighting for democracy in South Africa, we gladly take inspiration and learn from the experience of other persons who have fought for freedom in other continents and at other times.

Perhaps the most significant political accomplishment of our epoch at an international level has been the universalization of the ideas of democracy and human rights. Democracy does not belong to any part of the world, even less to any race. We all draw on it, we all contribute towards it. It may be likened to a single giant plant with roots in all the regions of the world, nurtured by the sufferings of people everywhere. The world has helped the anti-apartheid struggle; the anti-apartheid struggle helps the world. ■

State of transition

by Gerald Gordon and Dennis Davis

Framing a new constitution for a new South Africa

'Go back; look at the baby in his mother's arms; . . . listen to the first words which awaken his dormant powers of thought; and take notice of the first struggles he has to endure. Only then will you understand the origin of the prejudices, habits, and passions which are to dominate his life. The whole man is there, if one may put it so, in the cradle.

"Something analogous happens with nations. People always bear some marks of their origin. Circumstances of birth and growth affect all the rest of their careers.

"If we could go right back to the elements of societies and examine the very first records of their histories, we should there find the first cause of their prejudices, habits, dominating passions and all that comes to be called the national character."

Alexis de Tocqueville's words, in his classic *Democracy in America* (1835), can aid in an understanding of South Africa's enormous problems in its present hoped-for transition from a semi-authoritarian State to a democracy. When President de Klerk on 2 February 1990 unbanned the African National Congress (ANC) and other organizations of opposition to his Government's apartheid ideology, he was releasing passions that had been born in the preceding three centuries.

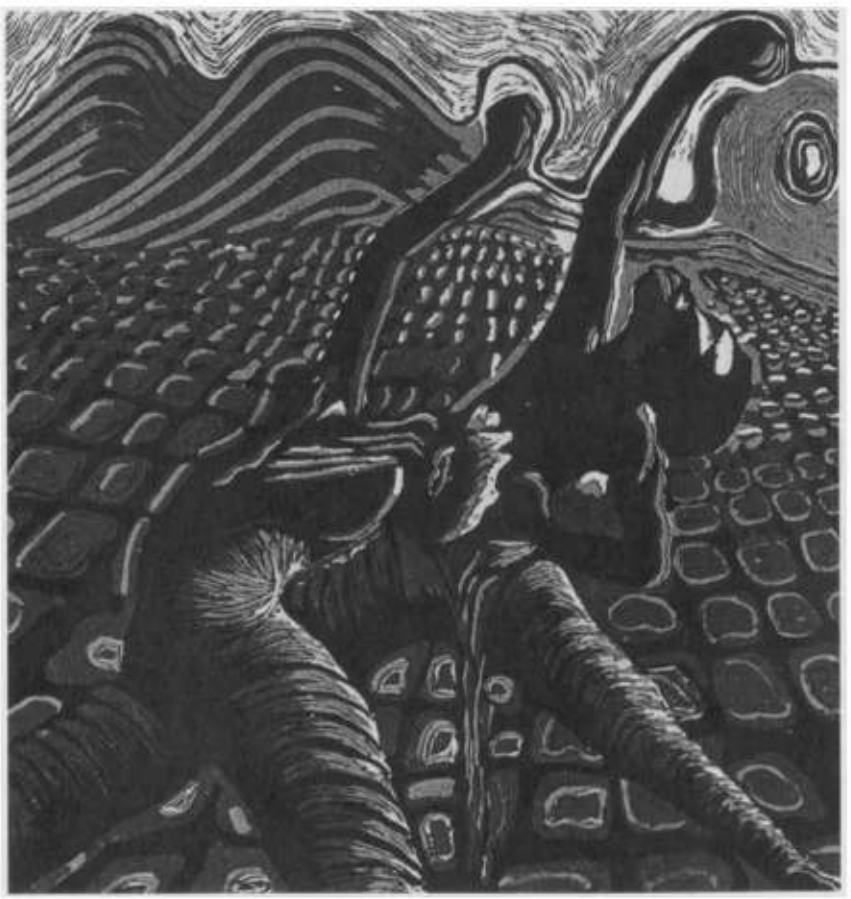
In the light of South Africa's history and the "prejudices, habits, passions and national character" to which de Tocqueville referred, the country is far from being ripe for democracy. There is hardly a common national character; the disparity of wealth between the richest 10 per cent and the poorest 50 per cent is one of the highest in the world and at least half the population is illiterate.

What makes the situation even more difficult is that a sovereign country like South Africa has no big brother to lend it a helping hand in its aim to substitute a wholesome democracy for the apartheid régime. Rhodesia went through its transition to independence as Zimbabwe with Lancaster House to turn to. Likewise Namibia had a big brother in the United Nations. But South Africa has no such State or body to supervise the processing and adoption of a new constitution. The price of sovereignty is solitude.

In cases where there is no supervising authority, forces competing for control of the processing and adoption of a new constitution have two alternatives. They must either fight their opponents in order to gain control of the machinery of the future government or negotiate with them to share or divide that control. By agreement they may use the existing constitutional structure. If agreement is not attainable they have to sweep the old constitution aside.

Understandably, in this context, organizations like the ANC are not prepared to allow the existing South African Parliament to legislate a new constitution into existence. If this Parliament were allowed to do so, it would be continuing the long legal line back to the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. There is one reason why it may be argued that the long line must be broken. An unbroken line would be legal but it would lack legitimacy: it would not be based on the norms and values of a desirable society. It is thus contended that the question of a new constitution must be approached in a vacuum.

There is also another reason. It involves the



***Towards Emancipation* (1988), a linocut by the South African artist Sydney Selepe.**

A march organized in Cape Town on 1 February 1991 against the exclusion of black South Africans from Parliament. In centre, Walter Sisulu, a leading figure in the anti-apartheid struggle.

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question of how far the opposition parties feel they can trust the Nationalist Government. And this turns on the question of the motivation for the now famous unbanning on 2 February 1990 of the ANC and the other opposition bodies such as the Pan African Congress and the Communist Party. Critics of the Nationalist Party (NP) claim that the true reason for the unbanning was that political and economic pressures on the international front had become too severe—more than the South African Government could face any longer. At last it realized its enormous dependence on the financial and technological resources of the international community.

The purported aim of the present great move towards democracy for South Africa is to be seen against the world background of an international commitment to democracy after the fall of European communism.

All in all, therefore, the way seemed open for the Nationalist Government to meet its old opponents at the negotiating table. Short of revolution and civil war—which has been the lot of many countries in Africa recently—it was and is the only way. And negotiation in turn revolves around the question of power.

While all the political parties (including organizations like the ANC which do not as yet regard themselves as "parties") are bargaining their way to a new South Africa and a new constitution, there has to be an interim constitution in control of law, order and peace. The drafting of the new constitution and its ultimate adoption are part of the negotiations and so the various parties have to come together to decide on the logistics of control.

The questions posed are: is the present government to be allowed to control the transition process? And to continue to hold the instruments of power? Is there to be some interim setup to displace the government? If so, how is it to be constituted? By elections? Who will control these? And what voters' roll will be used? The existing ones which exclude the 20 million Africans? And who is to set the timing, pace and placing of the elections?

Apart, however, from disputes concerning the mechanism for transition, the principal parties involved will doubtless focus their attention on the drafting of a new constitution.

The major parties, in particular the NP and the ANC, have published constitutional proposals. There is a surprising measure of agreement in respect of important aspects of the constitution. Both agree on the need for an electoral system based on proportional representation. Both agree that the lower house in parliament should be elected by universal suffrage. There is consensus regarding the need to incorporate a justiciable Bill of Rights into a new constitution. After much dispute, there now seems to be little doubt that a constitutional court will be created to supervise the operation of the Bill of Rights.

There remain, however, important points of difference. The ANC believes in a unitary system of government with strong central powers, which it considers necessary if the social and economic legacies of apartheid are to be addressed. The NP is particularly keen that power should be diffused and therefore it insists on federalism.

It also proposes a presidential troika in which the leaders of the three largest parties would form a collective presidency with the chair rotating annually, and the establishment of a second house of parliament in which each of nine regions would elect an equal number of representatives. Each party gaining a specified number of votes in a region would have an equal number of seats of that region's allocation.

In short, the ANC proposes a system of government of which voluntary association is the central pillar, while the NP has based its proposals on the principle of an imposed coalition. This constitutes the NP's concept of "participatory democracy" and "power sharing".

There are also fundamental disagreements concerning the contents of the Bill of Rights. The NP wishes to entrench the right to own private property which can only be expropriated in exchange for just compensation. The ANC considers that such a clause would prevent a future government from restoring land rights to millions of South Africans from whom they were taken by the policy of forced removals.

The ANC has included a range of social, economic and environmental provisions in its Bill of Rights. It contends that within the context of South Africa such a measure must make provision for the equal distribution of fundamental social and economic goods throughout society. The South African Law Commission, appointed by the Minister of Justice, accuses the ANC of utopian thinking because of the wide range of social and economic rights included in the latter's document.

In conclusion, there does seem to be a surprising degree of consensus regarding the major elements for a new constitution, particularly now that the NP has jettisoned its insistence upon the need to include protection of group rights. For this reason there is some ground to hope that agreement can be reached on the broad principles for a new constitution. ■

The future for women

The difficult path to a non-sexist as well as a non-racial democracy

GENDER discrimination, inherent in South African society, is rooted in the ethnic traditions of the multi-cultural communities, largely through the compliance of women themselves. Each cultural and ethnic group is grooved in systems of values that perceive women as subordinate to men. The apartheid State simply confirmed these values and in some cases incorporated them into its legal system.

Radical feminists in South Africa see the family as the foundation of women's oppression. However, the vast majority of women in South Africa, in particular black African women, experience the family as a source of emotional strength and the theatre of their self-realization, and value their roles as mothers and home workers. Their separation from the sphere of capital and power tends to make them relatively unambitious, far more value-centred than men and far more dependent on the family for their well-being.

Black South African women have waged the liberatory struggle from within the family, in response to oppression experienced by the family—less-than-subsistence wages, schooling, housing and medical services that were inadequate or non-existent, and so on. During that struggle, they have come to understand their own potential and have laid claim to their own freedoms.

Far from experiencing the family as an institution of oppression, they trace the subjugation of the African people to the violation of the African family and to the ways in which family members have been treated as commodities and turned into labour units for the convenience of the job market.

Most women in South Africa—and this is confirmed in interviews conducted by the Institute of Black Research with almost a thousand Indian, African and Coloured women working

A home in Soweto, the sprawling black ghetto outside Johannesburg.

by Fatima Meer

in factories in Durban—accept their subordination and do not feel a sense of oppression. Nor do they feel alienated from their men, whom they see as the most immediate victims of white domination. It is after all their men who fought and lost to the colonizer, who have made up by far the greatest number of casualties in political protest, and who have suffered most extensively from the brutal exploitations of capitalism.

This does not imply a blindness to gender oppression, but an inbred understanding that the major conflict in the country is racial and that the people need to be galvanized to resolve that conflict. Any deflection to subordinate conflicts like class and gender can only weaken the struggle.

African women, who comprise over 70 per cent of all women in South Africa, are generally the most oppressed group in the country, suffering the cumulative effects of racial and gender-based discrimination. Untrained in every sphere, under-educated and largely confined to the rural areas, the vast majority remain excluded from the job market. Those who are employed find employment in the lowest paid rungs. Of African women in gainful employment, 57 per cent are employed as domestic servants or agricultural labourers, and as such remain outside unionization and are subjected to the whims of their employers with regard to wages and conditions of work.

The problem of agricultural land affects African women most crucially, since the vast majority of them live in rural areas and are almost wholly responsible for any cultivation that exists in the homelands, to which African land rights are still restricted, despite the recent abolition of the Group Areas and the Native Land Acts. Twenty-five per cent of rural African families are entirely dependent for their subsistence on the land, worked largely by women, who are forced to farm using primitive techniques.

Industrialization in South Africa, for the African people who constitute 75 per cent of the population, is based on the principle of migrant labour. This has deprived the African family of its male head and destroyed the economic base of the African family.

Simultaneously, it has placed greater curbs on the entry of African women into the urban areas, subjecting them to authorization from male magistrates and male guardians. Thus while African men remain dangling on the margins of urbanization, the vast majority of African women remain unurbanized and impoverished, and poverty is their greatest oppressor.

These are some of the oppressive conditions from which South African women need urgent relief.

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South African sociologist, is director of the Institute for Black Research at the department of sociology of the University of Natal, Durban. She is the author of many published works, including *Higher than Hope*, a biography of Nelson Mandela (1990).

Until 1943, women were excluded from membership of the African National Congress, although the Bantu Women's League was active in it as early as 1913. Today the ANC slogan is "Forward to a non-racial, non-sexist democracy", and its Draft Bill of Rights provides for a minimum of social and economic rights and for affirmative action to redress disadvantages faced by women. This recognition of a double oppression in need of correction is significant for the South African future, since it comes from the political party popularly tipped to constitute the post-apartheid Government. Proposals from other parties speak of a women's ministry, of women's desks in government departments, and of affirmative action in as many public areas as possible until equality is achieved between the sexes.

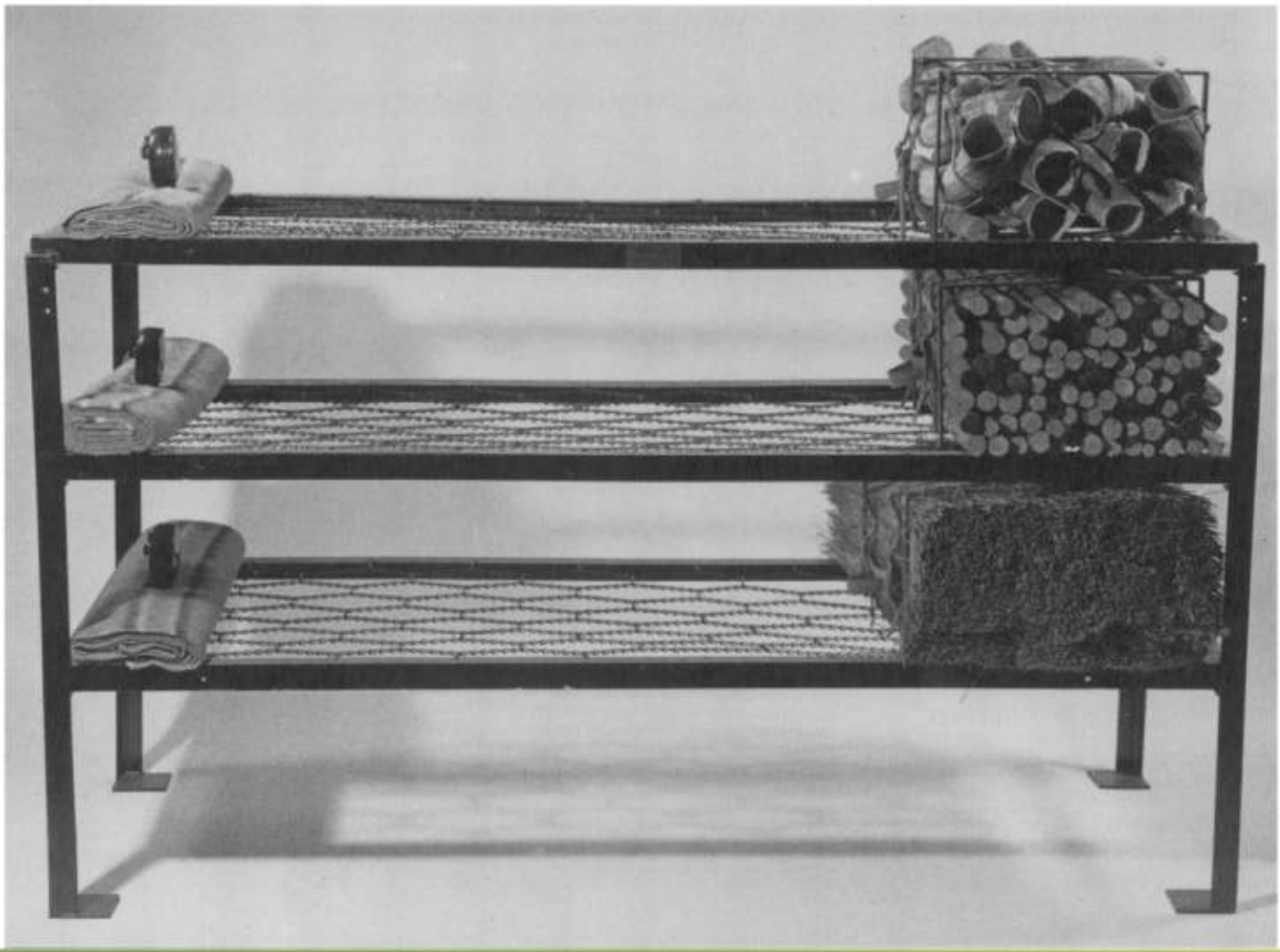
However, a policy approach is one thing: its implementation another. The post-apartheid government, to justify itself, will have to redress imbalances that have accumulated over more than 300 years, and these include gender imbalances.

The post-apartheid society will be under serious constraints to give priority to the full employment of young men. Women themselves can be expected to support such a policy, as is evident from the Durban survey, in which 69 per cent of the women held that men needed jobs more than women. Young black males constitute the most volatile sector of the South African population. They have played the crucial role in toppling apartheid, and they are eager to collect their dues. There is no matching expectation among young women.

While the post-apartheid State will be under enormous pressure to develop local black skills, it will find it easier to concentrate on the black male sector, and it will probably do so at the expense of women. Very probably, it will do so with their co-operation.

The integration of women into the public sector in South Africa, at a rate and under conditions equivalent to that of men, will thus depend on economic development, industrial need and industrial policy. The Durban survey revealed that while employers were satisfied with the performance of women in the workplace, women constituted the most vulnerable sector of the work force during depressions. The South African economy is in a slump, and while some recovery is expected in the post-apartheid era, this will hardly result in full employment for some time to come. Since industry will not need to draw massively on their labour, the State can be expected to spend no more than the minimum on child-care services, thereby confining women to the home and placing low priority on their skill training. Women will thus be in danger of remaining gripped in a vicious circle—no skills, unskilled low-wage occupations, high birth rate, inadequate child-care services—and so risk remaining confined to domestic and child-minding chores. ■

Women at work in Soweto.



Racial discrimination in cultural life

by Sipho Sepamla

***Hostel for Migrant Worker* (1978), a composite sculpture by the South African artist Michael Goldberg that incorporates three alarm-clocks as well as steel, wood, fibre and horns.**

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THERE is no cultural life for most of the people of South Africa today. No more writing is being produced by Africans living in the country. The origins of this situation can be traced to the Land Act of 1913, which took away the right of black people to own land. The population was arbitrarily separated into locations for blacks, Indians, coloureds and whites. Halls and other facilities were built for weddings, funerals and football matches, but not for plays, concerts and other cultural events. The black population had to adapt these halls for all-purpose use. Development of the arts has thus been controlled in the African townships ever since 1913. Things became even worse in the 1970s.

In the 1950s there were many cultural activities in the townships, with famous singers like Miriam Makeba, an active literary scene, and the emergence of political leaders like Mandela and Tambo. Some people have referred to this period as a golden cultural age.

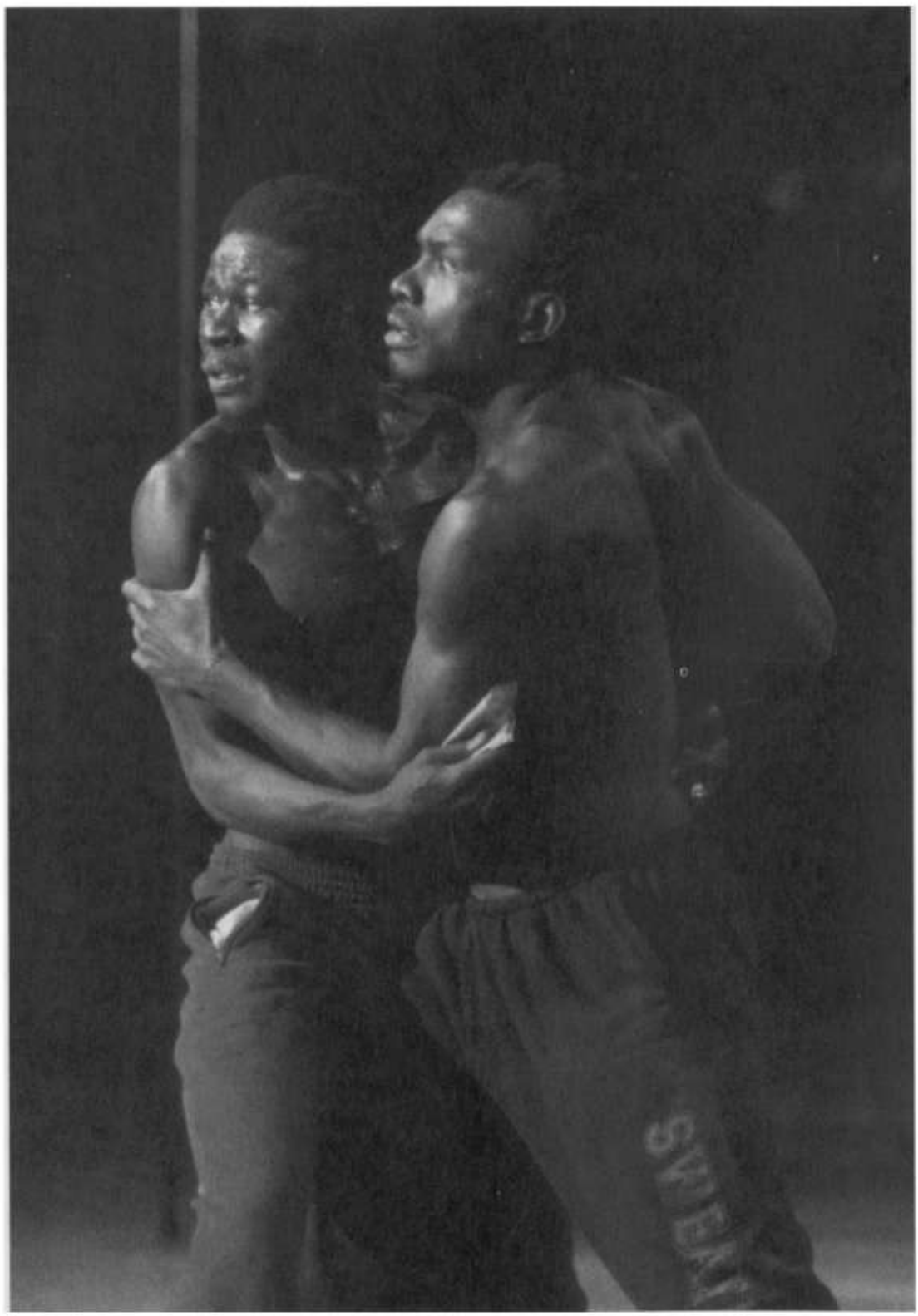
This creative activity died out in the 1970s as a result of a number of government measures. The Entertainment and Publications Act in 1963 led to a large number of African writers being banned, even if they were not involved in politics. Many left the country. Censorship was tightened even further by the Publications Act of 1974, which prohibits access to literature from abroad. Censorship operates on two levels. Officially it functions through a Censorship Board. On the other level, superintendents in the townships, ostensibly officials whose functions are to collect rent and repair street lights and potholed streets, are also censors. A play cannot be performed unless the superintendent considers it suitable.

The Censorship Board is discriminatory. The publication of books by white writers is authorized, even if they are politically critical, whereas anything written by a black writer, especially in English, is banned. It was only when writers like Nadine Gordimer or André Brink were banned

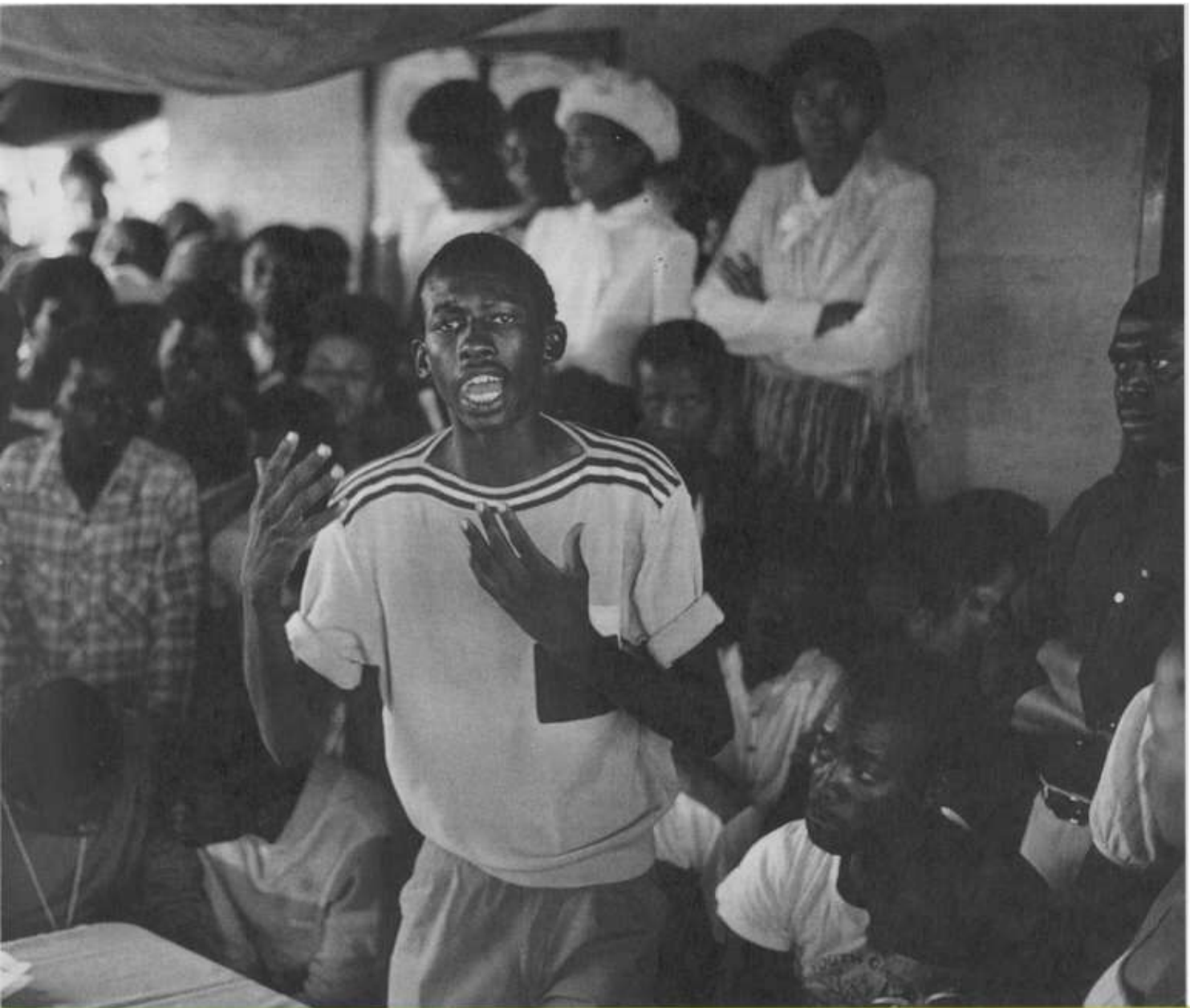
that public outcry and protests occurred. By that time black creative activity had come to a standstill.

Because of the Group Areas Act, even when you went to a library, you could not borrow a book, but only consult it there. The depressed state of the cultural scene is aggravated by the kind of education received by Africans. Other groups are allowed to study arts at school, but black children have few alternatives and no opportunity for training in the fine arts, music, museums, theatre, etc.

So far the Government has done very little, and real change can only be expected when a representative Government takes over. In the meantime assistance and donations from the international community would be welcomed. Qualified teachers, arts equipment and the construction of new premises are all needed. As far as pressure on apartheid structures is concerned, the cultural boycott is being maintained. However, relevant assistance to the majority population should be stepped up, in keeping with the recommendations of the United Nations.■



Left, a scene from *Woza Albert!*, a South African musical by Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema and Barney Simon that was staged in Paris in December 1989 in the framework of the Year of Human Rights and Liberties. Written for the black townships and carrying a political message, the play was a major international success that gave a new impetus to black South African theatre.
Above, a young poet recites "freedom poetry" at the funeral of a victim of social unrest at Bethal in the northeast of South Africa.



People's literature

by Nadine Gordimer

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A testament of faith in the untapped creative resources of South Africa's excluded masses

PEOPLE'S literature as a particular mode appropriate to the present is something most developed countries have no call for. Their contemporary literature is confidently middle-class—which is to say it may assume an educated reader with whom the writer shares terms of reference. The demand for a People's Literature seems to have been answered once and for all, and the need apparently satisfied, by the comic book, with the people's hero as an extra-terrestrial, and by oral folk poets—the wise-cracking commentators, disc jockeys and presenters of television and radio. Thus the semi-literate and illiterate appear to be uncomplainingly provided for.

But in developing countries the situation is different. The Irish poet Seamus Heaney's "government of the tongue" does not have the same constituency. In the post-colonial world in general, and in South Africa specifically, the illiterate and semi-literate now surround the cultural convention.

They have been called up by history.

They have been called up by justice. For over 300 years, not only were they excluded from any role in defining cultural norms; it was denied that they had any need of these let alone anything to contribute. If they could read, there were virtually no common references, no givens, between them and white writers, and few between them and black writers, the latter already upwardly alienated by education and the white-collar style of life it has implied. Now, beyond the opportunities to acquire knowledge of modern science, technology and administration, there is asserted the masses' right to enjoy the self-realization of literature. Here, where the responsibility of educationists is seen as exceeded, it is the writers themselves who are expected to take over.

The demand is for a particular fictional mode: subjects, narrative form, vocabulary to express ethics, mores and relationships that arise from the daily lives of peasants and industrial labourers where there has never been a mode stemming from their own level of consciousness. It means finding a format and distribution process that will bring books arising directly out of that consciousness into the ghettoes and squatter camps where there are no libraries, and into the farm huts where there is no money to buy books in the form of consumer luxuries.

It is formulated as a call for a People's Literature.

How does People's Literature differ from plain old social realism?

There is a basic distinction of the greatest consequence. Any writer may become a social realist by choosing a worker as his or her protagonist or hero. It is subject and treatment of subject which defines social realism, not the class of the writer.

But in South Africa, People's Literature is conceived as that written *by*, not about, the people. Thus it seems the responsibility for creating it is not even that of any progressive literary establishment.

Who are "the people"?

Virtually all blacks and so-called coloureds, who comprise the overwhelming majority of the population, qualify under the blunt definition of workers as those who, if they don't get up in the morning and go to work, won't eat: blacks don't have unearned income. But the image of "the people" has come to be symbolized more specifically in the features of farm workers, miners and construction workers: the rural people and the manpower they export under the migratory labour system to single-sex hostels in the industrial areas.

The image is appropriate. These workers stand, historically, at either end of that system established by the conflation of capitalism and racism; in between is the whole span of black labour yoked by the white man—factory workers, street cleaners, domestic servants. The agricultural workers on white farms are the

lowest paid, having no statutory minimum wage; the miners and industrial workers are the freest on the way to economic emancipation, having organized themselves in powerful trade unions which will one day end the migratory labour system that brought them from country to town without the right to be accompanied by their families.

A People's Literature therefore means—to paraphrase Walter Benjamin—literature conceived as the people's "ability to relate" their own lives.

But Benjamin was speaking of the storyteller among the people—a title which in itself sets the relater aside as someone who has emerged from those with whom he shares the conditions of living. The object of People's Literature, in the context of which I am speaking, is to do away with the title, to reject its function of singling-out, with attendant connotations of a particular

South African road-workers.

gift or talent others do not have. A year or two ago a South African literary journal featured "Worker Poets" as a special category of poet, as one might speak of the lyricist or symbolist. The poems were written, in their spare time, by people who labour with their hands. But the validation of their status *as poets* was that they were *workers.* The syllogism follows: writing poetry is not work; any workers can write poetry; therefore poets are not workers.

The "worker" poet or playmaker or prose fiction writer does not wish to emancipate him or herself from the condition of worker; not at all. He is asserting not a desire to opt out of the labour class, but his right, as a worker, to the making of poetry, of literature—his right to transcendence not as a quality that will exalt him above the dirt of toil, but which is integral to it. He is asserting his right to the ecstasy of creation while doing piece-work eight hours a day.

This has been a deep subconscious desire, beyond material justice, in most workers' movements; it is present in the determination of the liberation movements to establish a workers' democracy in South Africa.

The "worker poets" are the balladeers of strikes, wage disputes, the perils of industrial accidents, the violence experienced in clashes with the police sent in by the bosses or the State to break strikes. The balladeer is himself one of the striking workers; he is himself miles underground with his fellow miners when the rock-fall occurs. It is the experience that makes him a poet, it is the rhetoric of union meetings and the liberation movements' manifestos that gives him the Word.

To those of us who look for an intensely transformed experience in reading poetry, not *experience as poetry,* generalized doggerel put together mainly out of slogans stirs little response. But People's Literature, it can be argued, is not for the reader who is looking for experience intensified by the writer; it is for those whose own experience *exceeds the intensity of words.* Therefore the most banal of verbal signals will set off identification. People's Literature is not meant to enlarge the reader's understanding beyond his familiar work, but to concentrate his understanding on the worth and dignity of that world, give it its rightful place in the national consciousness as the class-alienated storyteller is believed not to be able to do.

How is this to be achieved?

The cover of a recent number of *Cultural Worker,* the journal of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, quotes the Angolan writer Jorge Rebello: ". . . forge simple words/that even children can understand/words which will enter every house/like the wind."

Nothing is more difficult. Some with the vocabulary of genius at their command have spent a lifetime striving for the words that will enter every house.

In the context of a People's Literature it is either a glorious demand, based on faith in the untapped creative resources of the masses, or a total misunderstanding of the labour that writing is, to believe this achievement could come from the spare-time occupation of *anybody* who has the appropriate life experience. Handling the unfamiliar tool of the written word, what the "worker poet" fashions is likely to be what Njabulo Ndebele has termed the "interaction of the surface symbols of South African reality"—no more.

So far, drama is the literary form which best shows positive signs of realizing the concept of a People's Literature. Some reasons may be identified. The worker-actor-playmakers are in total, immediate interaction with the roles they play in real life. There is unity of experience in the actuality of dramatized events "set" on the factory floor, for the workers' plots are contemporary autobiography—the clashes between themselves and the bosses, the relation between

the workers' own differing personalities and states of awareness. Any inadequacy of dialogue is overcome by song and mime. Humour and the *physical* individuality of performance break the bonds of rhetoric in which the "worker poets" bind themselves.

In a recent play, Mrs. Thatcher, represented by a worker wearing a huge, toothy papier-mâché blonde head, takes a coffee break with the bosses as a metaphor for collusion between British capitalism and South African industry. The mode so happily hit upon is something between Grand Guignol and Brecht—an observation using references that might mean nothing to the players, and of which, indeed, they prove they have no need, having of themselves arrived at a successful means of relating their own lives among their own people.

For the professional writer the ultimate problem in the creation of a People's Literature is not so much, in the case of the black writer, that he has been removed from the common lot. It is not so much, in the case of the white writer, that no matter how involved he or she may be in the cause of black liberation, he or she has never shared the general experience of living on the dark side of the colour bar.

The problem is that generations of the most appalling cultural deprivation inevitably have produced in the masses a deep resentment of the "republic of letters". In South Africa this "republic", like all other pretensions to democracy, has been a mockery of the name. It has discounted the masses entirely, whether as creators or consumers of literature. Blacks have felt that the only way to belong, in literature, except as other people's material, was to cease to be one of the people. And that, in this revolutionary era, is to cease to be yourself: your black self taking your own liberation and life in your own hands.

The desperate determination to claim the worth of that life in the lasting form of art is in conflict with any acceptance that the writer does what the worker cannot do—that the practice of writing is a craft, a trade in itself. Why be surprised? The resentment engendered by this conflict has led other revolutions to send their writers to cut cane. In capitalist societies it has jealously led to sending writers to perform in chat shows—*anything* rather than have the masses recognize that the writer labours at a vocation whose condition is not open to the public, even if anyone may become President. . . .

But the concept of a People's Literature not only assumes everyone can write. It also assumes everyone reads or will read. Alas, we know this has not proved to be the case in most countries where the majority has become literate and books are available in all communities, through libraries. Certainly not in the Western world. Comic-book literacy is not book-literacy.

With desk-top publishing and modest new forms of distribution through trade union and community organizations in South Africa's black ghettoes, journals and books are beginning, in a very small way, to be part of the furnishing of places where people gather, and as such may begin to be used as essentials.

It is early to judge, perhaps, but I believe it significant that Ravan Press, which publishes a series of "simple" books, written in a limited vocabulary by blacks who, if not always "worker

A series of linocuts by the South African artist Vuyile C. Voyiya. From top: *Rhythm in 3/4 time I, Rhythm in 3/4 time II, Rhythm in 3/4 time IV,* and *In the coffin of my skin.*

Rows upon rows of "bachelor quarters" in which black South African workers are obliged to live cut off from their families.

writers" in the strict sense, are at the remove only of a rural schoolteacher from that category, found a surprising demand for an expensive scholarly work, far removed from the rhetoric of political pamphlets as from any assumed naivety of "people's" fiction. This was Tom Lodge's *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*. Skotaville Publishers had a similar experience with Mokgethi Motlhabi's *Black Resistance to Apartheid*.

Of course, these are not works of the imagination; but the effort of comprehension may stir something that leads to works of the imagination. For, in Benjamin's beautiful aphorism, literature's great offering is its "creation of a demand which could be satisfied only later". And that is surely a perfect definition and defence of literature's *revolutionary* function. Literature calls up the effort to formulate and analyse vague yearnings, to resolve frustration and resentment through grasping their causes and acting upon them at a level of roused *being* the learning-by-maxim of political education cannot reach. Here stands the writer's real justification for his existence in the revolutionary situation, and the claim for the practice of literature as a category of work demanding special aptitudes and skills.

It has to be accepted that talent is not a right—alas, no.

But every means of giving talent a chance to discover itself, to grow within political, economic and social structures conducive to this, *is* a right. None of these structures has ever existed for the black masses in South Africa, in a succession of racist régimes. Writing talent has been stifled, wasted, distorted by exile within as well as without the country. But this talent will not be freed to create a People's Literature, in the true sense that literature shall embody the consciousness of the masses instead of that only of an élite, if writing is regarded as a kind of therapy for industrial alienation.

By law and lack of education, by lack of libraries—which are the writer's continuing education—by lack of a corner to themselves with a table to write at, the potential writers among the people have been cast as miners, street cleaners, ditch diggers. If there is to be a People's Literature it will come about because these writers will now do, instead, the work they are gifted and fitted for. If there is to be a People's Literature it will come about only if there is no State interference, and if social conditions ensure that comic book literacy, disseminated through the long-established colonial agencies which continue to monopolize distribution of publications in the entire African sub-continent, does not become the people's literary culture, as it has in so many parts of the world.

Only then could the contradictions of a "People's Literature" begin to be resolved. Only then, when asked "Who writes?", those of us who work to create a post-colonial, post-apartheid culture in South Africa might be able to answer: all who have the ability. And when asked, "Who reads?", might be able to answer: the people. ■

NADINE GORDIMER,
South African writer, was awarded the 1991 Nobel prize for literature. Her fictional works and essays chronicle the experience of a society torn apart by apartheid, against which she has always fought, actively supporting black South African writers. She is the author of ten novels and more than 200 short stories, the most recent a collection entitled *Jump* (1991) and a novel, *My Son's Story* (1990).

The UN's long campaign against apartheid

THE United Nations has been in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid for over four decades. The General Assembly has condemned apartheid as a crime against humanity, and the Security Council, which has considered the question since 1960, has termed apartheid a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind.

The United Nations has sought to help bring about a peaceful solution of the conflict by promoting concerted international action, including the isolation of South Africa diplomatically, economically and militarily, the development of international norms against apartheid and the provision of assistance to the victims of apartheid and their liberation movements.

The racial policies of South Africa were discussed at the very first United Nations General Assembly session in 1946, when India complained that the Government had enacted legislation which discriminated against South Africans of Indian origin. During the 1950s, as South Africa persisted in and intensified its policies of racial segregation, numerous resolutions concerning apartheid were adopted.

The Sharpeville massacre

In March 1960, sixty-nine people were killed and 180 wounded at Sharpeville, when South African police opened fire on peaceful, unarmed demonstrators protesting against the "pass laws". The "pass laws" required that all Africans carry "reference documents" which served as identification and as work and travel permits. The incident and its aftermath, which rocked South Africa, aroused world opinion and marked a turning point in deliberations on apartheid at the United Nations.

For the first time the matter was taken up by the Security Council, which on 1 April 1960 adopted a resolution stating that a continuation of South Africa's racial policies might endanger international peace and security and calling upon the South African Government to abandon its policies of apartheid and racial discrimination. The General Assembly asked Member States to break off diplomatic relations with South Africa, boycott South African goods and refrain from all exports to South Africa, including the export of armaments. In 1962, it established a special body, known since 1974 as the Special Committee against Apartheid. The mandate of the Committee is to review all aspects of South Africa's policies of apartheid and the international repercussions of these policies.

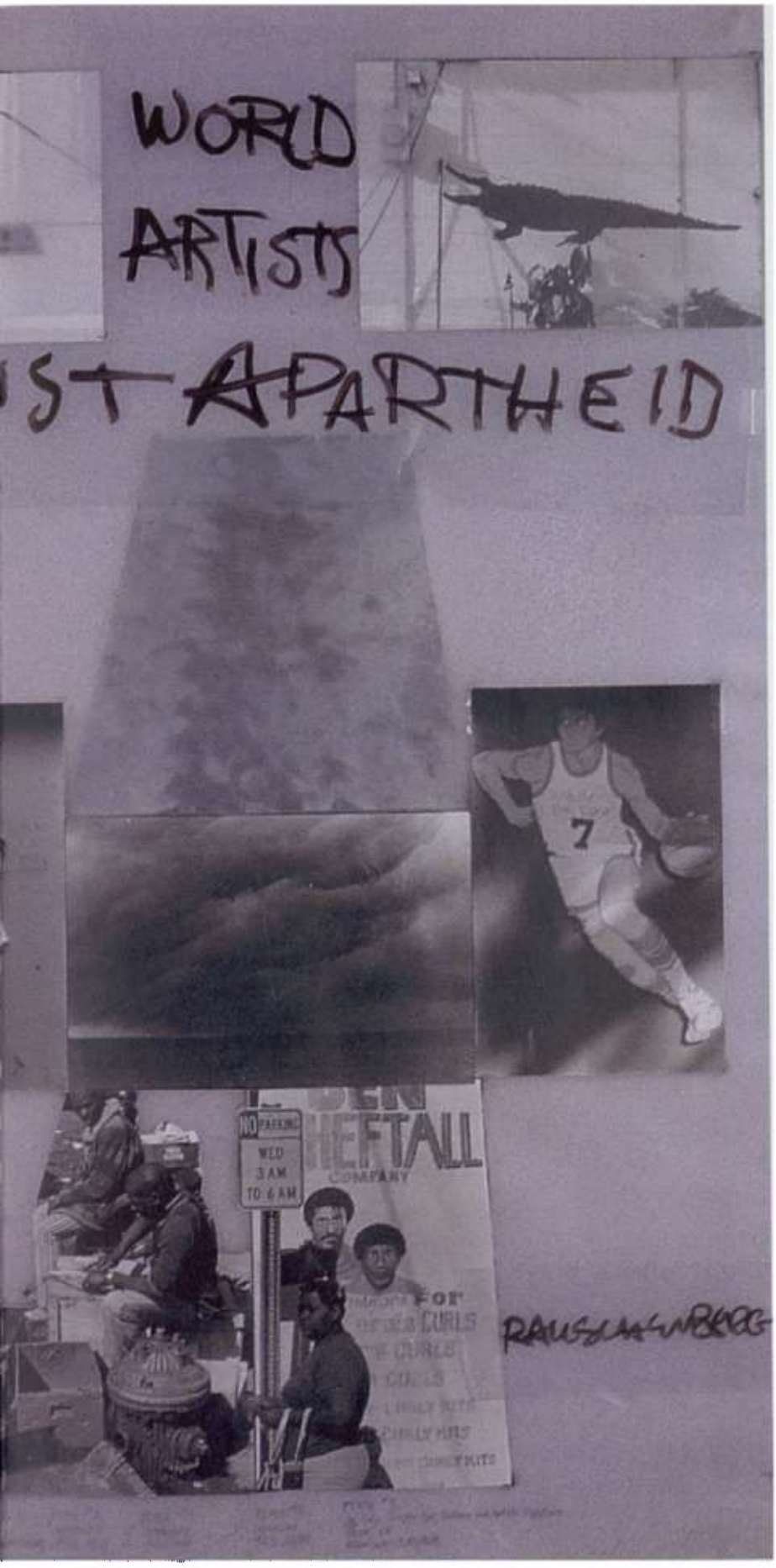
The Committee quickly assumed an activist role in what the General Assembly in 1966 would formally designate as the "international campaign against apartheid". It has promoted sports, cultural, consumer and other boycotts and, with the Centre against Apartheid, established in 1976, has co-operated with Governments, intergovernmental organizations, religious leaders, student and youth movements and anti-apartheid groups in mobilizing international public opinion in support of United Nations resolutions against apartheid.

In a move to provide assistance to the victims of apartheid, the General Assembly in 1965 established the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa. The Fund is based on voluntary contributions from which grants are made to organizations for legal aid to persons persecuted under South Africa's repressive and discriminatory laws, relief to such persons and their dependents, and relief for refugees from South Africa. Two years later, the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa (UNETPSA) was set up. One of its functions is to provide scholarships for higher education to disadvantaged students from South Africa and Namibia.

During the 1970s, continued efforts by the United Nations to persuade South Africa to abandon the system of apartheid were intensified. In 1973, the General Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, which came into force in 1976. The following year, the General Assembly barred the delegation of South Africa from participating in its work, and recommended the exclusion of South Africa from participation in all international organizations and conferences under United Nations auspices as long as the authorities continued to practice apartheid. Since then, South Africa has not participated in the proceedings of the General Assembly.

In 1974, the UN invited the national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity—the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania—to participate as observers in its debates on the question of apartheid, and later recognized the movements as "the authentic representatives of the overwhelming majority of the South African people". They attend United Nations meetings and conferences, and are consulted on decisions concerning South Africa.

In 1976 and subsequently, the General Assembly denounced South Africa's declarations of "independence" for the so-called homelands



Untitled **(1982), a collage by the American artist Robert Rauschenberg. This poster and that shown on page 44 were produced for an exhibition entitled "Fifteen Artists against Apartheid", organized on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 21 March 1983.**

or bantustans, none of which has consequently gained any diplomatic recognition by the international community.

A historic step—the mandatory arms embargo

The Security Council took a historic step in November 1977, making mandatory the voluntary arms embargo against South Africa which it had called for in 1963. This marked the first time that the United Nations had taken action against a Member State under Chapter VII of the Charter, which provides for enforcement action with respect to threats to the peace.

In 1982, the South African Government began to introduce measures which it claimed were reforms of the system, among them the establishment of a racially segregated tricameral parliament, including Asians and Coloureds but excluding Africans. The General Assembly condemned these measures since they maintained power exclusively in the hands of the white majority and failed to offer any political rights to blacks.

Efforts by the United Nations in the first half of the 1980s were directed mainly towards gaining support for the implementation of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa in order to isolate the country from the international community and force it to abandon its apartheid policies.

In 1985, the level of violence and unrest increased in South Africa, and the Government declared a nation-wide state of emergency, banning many opponents of apartheid or detaining them without trial. Acting in response to the imposition of these repressive policies, the General Assembly stepped up its anti-apartheid activities. In February 1986, the Security Council adopted a sweeping resolution including a demand for the lifting of the state of emergency, the release of all political prisoners and detainees and the eradication of apartheid. However, efforts in the Security Council in July 1986—and several subsequent attempts as well—to make economic sanctions mandatory were not successful.

Sport and cultural boycotts win world-wide support

The sports, cultural and academic boycotts of South Africa, whose implementation has been monitored by the United Nations, have been important means of exerting pressure on the South African authorities. By involving millions of people worldwide they became a particularly effective way to educate public opinion, demonstrate international abhorrence of the apartheid system and press for reforms.

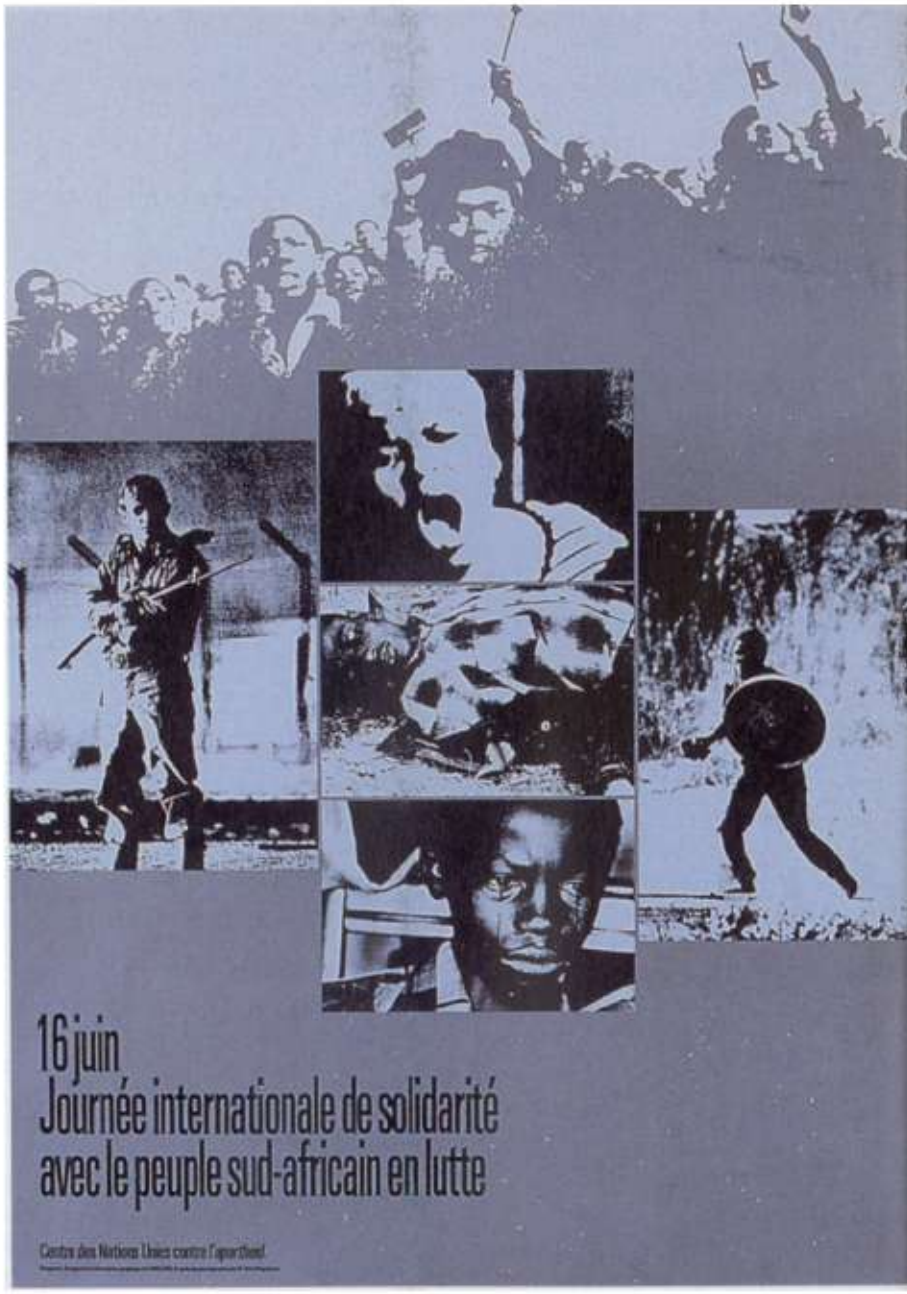
The ban on sporting contacts with individuals or organizations from either inside or outside South Africa was legalized when the International Convention against Apartheid in Sports, adopted by the General Assembly in 1985, came into effect in April 1988. The Commission against Apartheid in Sports has since 1989 monitored the sports boycott. Since 1981, at the request of the Special Committee against Apartheid, the Centre

against Apartheid has published a periodic register containing the names of athletes who ignored the ban.

Under the cultural boycott, first called for by the United Nations in 1968, entertainers, actors and other artists were requested to work towards the cultural isolation of South Africa. From 1988 onwards, the guidelines for the boycott, which were elaborated by prominent entertainers and artists at a Symposium held in Athens, Greece, placed outside its scope those cultural and academic activities which had the intent and effect of opposing apartheid, enriching the culture of the oppressed people of South Africa and furthering the liberation struggle. Since the early 1980s, and at the request of the Special Committee against Apartheid, the Centre has published a Register of entertainers, actors and others who have performed in South Africa.

On 13 December 1991, in recognition of the progress that had been made towards abolishing apartheid, the General Assembly called unanimously for nations to start restoring sports, cultural, scientific and academic ties with South Africa. It recommended that sports links be resumed with unified, non-racial sporting organizations within South Africa and that assistance be given to disadvantaged athletes in the country. It also called for a resumption of links with democratic anti-apartheid organizations and individuals in the cultural, academic and scientific fields.

Many United Nations bodies and specialized agencies such as UNESCO and the International Labour Organisation have played an important part in the campaign against apartheid. The Commission on Human Rights has kept apartheid under close review and oversees the implementation of the conventions against racial discrimination and apartheid. The United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations has focused on the role of foreign investment, trade and loans through the transnational corporations in sustaining apartheid.



Two posters issued in 1988 by the United Nations Centre against Apartheid.

The Declaration on Apartheid—a milestone in UN action

In the late 1980s, world developments and events in South Africa contributed to an important breakthrough at the General Assembly. In 1989, through the efforts of the Special Committee and the Centre Against Apartheid, consensus was achieved for the first time on substantive resolutions on apartheid. In December 1989, at a Special Session, the General Assembly approved specific guidelines for the peaceful dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. The guidelines were contained in the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa. The adoption of the Declaration by consensus was unprecedented, and clearly demonstrated the unity of the world community on the South African question and its resolution.

The Declaration encouraged the people of South Africa to join together to negotiate an end to apartheid and to agree on all the measures necessary to transform South Africa into a non-racial democracy. It indicated the fundamental principles for a new constitutional order; measures to be taken by the South African authorities to create a climate conducive to negotiations and free political activity; guidelines to the process of negotiation; and a programme of action that called for sustained international action until there was clear evidence of profound and irreversible changes, bearing in mind the objectives of the Declaration, namely the eradication of apartheid and the establishment of a united, non-racial, democratic South Africa.

Nelson Mandela at the UN

In February 1990, in a speech at the opening of parliament two months after the Special Session, South African President F.W. de Klerk announced a lifting of the ban on the African National Congress and other anti-apartheid movements together with a number of other reform measures, and stated that his final aim was a totally new and just constitutional dispensation

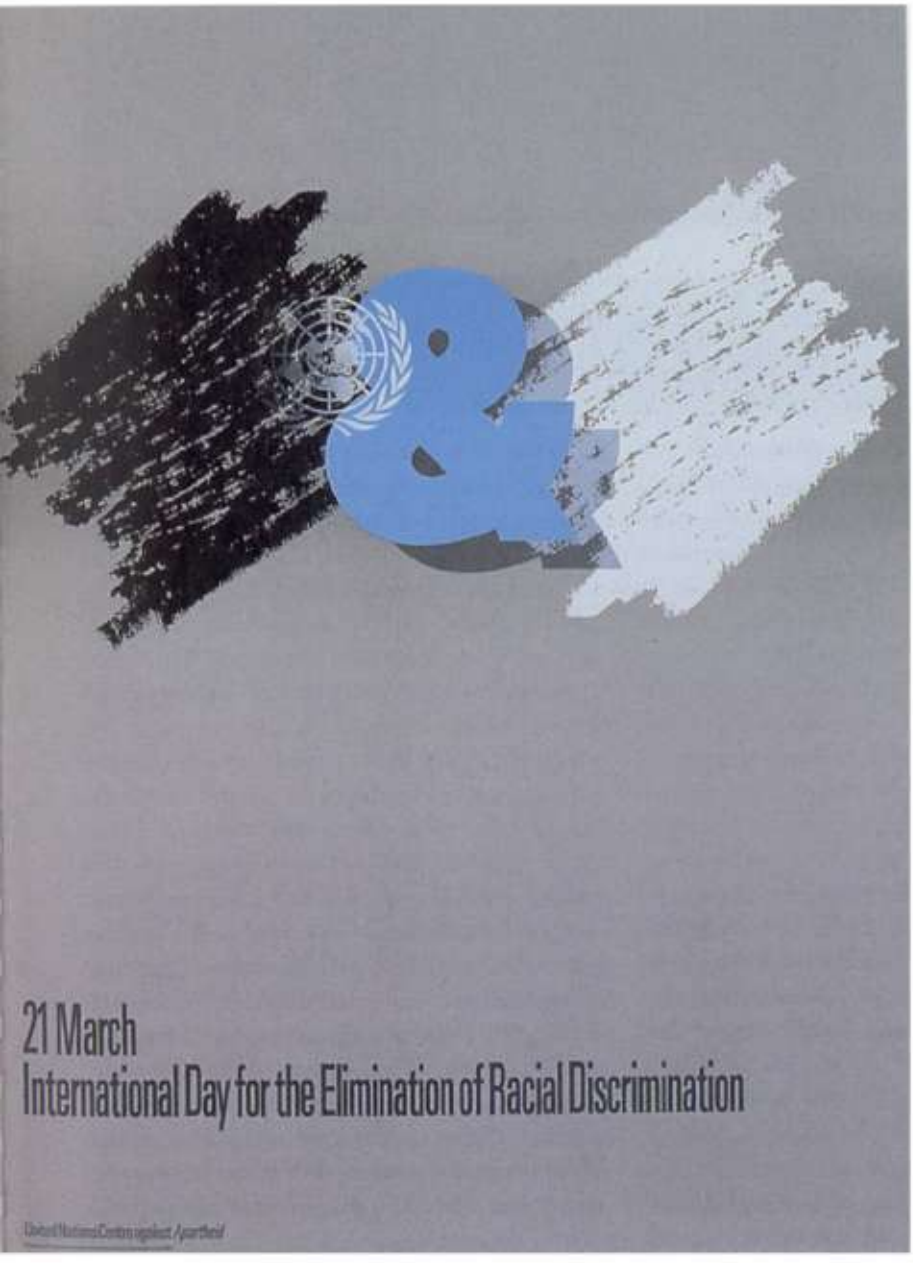
This article has been specially prepared for the *UNESCO Courier* by the United Nations Centre against Apartheid

for South Africa. On 11 February 1990, Nelson Mandela was released after twenty-seven years of imprisonment, and in June 1990 he addressed a special meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid at United Nations Headquarters.

The Secretary-General sent a mission to South Africa in June 1990 to report on progress that had been made in the implementation of the UN Declaration towards the dismantling of apartheid. The General Assembly took careful note of the ensuing Secretary-General's report, and in September 1990 adopted a resolution which called upon the South African Government to take a number of steps and the international community to maintain the pressure on South Africa, in order to bring about a speedy end to apartheid through negotiations.

Despite certain setbacks, considerable progress was made during 1990 and 1991 towards the resolution of the conflict in South Africa. A number of steps specified in the United Nations Declaration as necessary for establishing a climate conducive to negotiations were implemented, including the repeal of the major apartheid laws, the ending of the state of emergency and the lifting of bans on political organizations. Also, many political prisoners were released.

As noted by the Secretary-General in his second progress report, released in September 1991 and covering the period from June 1990, the process towards the ending of apartheid in South Africa, although halting, has remained on course. As he pointed out, the convening of a meeting of all parties concerned to discuss and draft a new constitution based on non-racial, universal suffrage tops the political agenda.



A continuing struggle

One of the major obstacles to the beginning of the talks was removed when an agreement was reached in August between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the South African authorities, which cleared the way for UNHCR to begin to provide assistance in the voluntary repatriation of an estimated 30,000-40,000 political exiles and refugees, who will now be able to return home, free from the threat of persecution.

Although the end of the road may be in sight, the long struggle against apartheid is certainly not over yet. An array of discriminatory laws are still on South Africa's statute books, political trials continue, and a number of political prisoners are still in jail. Outbreaks of the violence which has wracked the country continue. Furthermore, the apartheid system has generated widespread poverty and grave crises in the economy, particularly in the education, employment, health and housing sectors. Unless concerted efforts to redress these issues are made, the social and economic problems they cause could jeopardize the ongoing process towards negotiations, the success of a constitutional settlement and the future stability of the country.

Through its concerted efforts over the years, the United Nations has played a vital role in forging an international consensus on action for the elimination of apartheid. The Organization will continue to work to maintain that consensus throughout the transitional period. It will continue to promote the maintenance of the pressure needed for the early establishment of transitional arrangements, the agreement on a new constitution, and the installation of a democratic government.

The United Nations will also provide assistance to the opponents of apartheid and the disadvantaged sectors of South African society in a concerted and co-ordinated manner, as well as encourage the international community to assist in addressing the glaring socio-economic inequalities in the country. By this two-track approach, the United Nations aims at reinforcing the momentum towards the establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. Only when this has been achieved can it be said that the international community has fulfilled its moral and political obligations to remove a system from the world that affronted the sense of dignity and humanity of mankind. ■

UNESCO and the elimination of apartheid

by Francine Fournier

UNESCO drew up a programme for the elimination of apartheid in the 1950s. In fact, it was in reaction to studies carried out within this programme, which were being circulated by the Institute of Race Relations in South Africa, that South Africa decided to withdraw from UNESCO in 1955.

In 1965, at the request of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid, UNESCO initiated a programme of social science research to elucidate the effects of apartheid and to produce reliable and objective information on what was actually happening in South Africa. The publication *Apartheid, Its Effects on Education, Science, Culture and Information* (1967, revised edition 1972) was the first in a series of works that UNESCO has produced over the years on the problems of apartheid in South Africa and Namibia. Other studies deal *inter alia* with the impact of apartheid on social science research, the falsification of history, the influence of apartheid policies on news reporting, anti-development in

Opposite page: *Apartheid No*, a poster created by the Italian painter Leonardo Cremonini in 1983. Above, a class of black pupils in the so-called Bantu system of primary education.

the so-called bantustans, the effects of emergency rule on education, information and culture, and the dynamics of race and class in an apartheid society.

UNESCO has also undertaken to mobilize the intellectual and academic community, artists, creators, media professionals and educationalists in various countries.

A UNESCO International Meeting of University Researchers held in Beijing, China, from 1 to 4 September 1986 drew up a Five-Year Research Plan on Apartheid. As a follow-up to the recommendations of this meeting, several international working groups of scholars were convened to reflect on problems of apartheid: one on the economy and apartheid in co-operation with the University of the West Indies (in Kingston, Jamaica, 21 to 28 April 1989); one on women, apartheid and options for a post-apartheid society (in Caracas, Venezuela, 19 to 21 September 1989); and one on apartheid and culture (in Dakar, Senegal, 27 to 30 November 1989). Problems encountered by the Front-Line States were examined during a sub-regional workshop organized under contract with the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies on the effects of destabilization policies of South Africa in the fields of education, science and culture (in Harare, Zimbabwe, 20 to 24 February 1989).

Over the years, UNESCO has likewise provided technical and material assistance, through the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress, to the development of educational structures and programmes for refugees in asylum countries and for training key personnel.

In 1989, UNESCO adopted a Special Project which, while continuing to focus on the eradication of apartheid, also has the longer-term objective of reflecting on and helping the people of South Africa to prepare the foundations for a future apartheid-free, democratic society. In order to contribute to reflection on the needs and priorities of an apartheid-free society, three major meetings were convened during 1991.

1. A Workshop on Human Rights Issues for a Post-Apartheid South Africa was organized jointly by UNESCO and the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, The Gambia, from 18 to 21 June 1991.

Participants at the Workshop, while noting certain positive developments, pointed out the shortcomings of on-going legislative reforms. Certain apartheid structures remained intact—notably the "bantustans", the tri-cameral racially defined parliament, the police and the security

Frederik de Klerk and Nelson Mandela at the signing of the National Peace Accord in Johannesburg on 14 September 1991.

forces. Affirmative action, including for women, was required to tackle the legacies of apartheid and institutionalized racism.

2. An International Conference on Educational Needs of the Victims of Apartheid was organized by the UN Special Committee against Apartheid and UNESCO, in co-operation with the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 25 to 27 June 1991.

The Conference called for a radical restructuring of the entire educational system and international support for urgent training of the black population. Universities and other educational institutions which were promoting educational and training programmes for the black majority population deserved particular support from the international community. The role played by anti-apartheid organizations during the transition period was recognized, and the Conference endorsed the convening of a national meeting of non-racial educational organizations and specialists, to take place in South Africa at an early date, in order to further work out national priorities and strategies in education and training.

3. UNESCO convened a Working Group on Problems of Access of Africans to Science and Technology, with particular reference to South Africa, in Lusaka, Zambia, from 17 to 20 September 1991, in which African specialists in science and technology participated, as well as representatives of ANC, PAC and UN specialized agencies. This workshop examined various obstacles to the involvement of the black population in science and technology, with particular reference to tertiary-level education and possibilities for future assistance in preparing a non-discriminatory science and technology policy for a free South Africa.

In the immediate future, UNESCO plans to contribute actively to the Conference on the Future Role of the United Nations System in Efforts to Redress the Socio-Economic Inequalities in South Africa being organized under the auspices of the UN Centre against Apartheid and the Special Committee against Apartheid in Windhoek in February 1992, as well as a joint UN system study on this topic. A workshop on problems of nation-building and of promoting a culture of peace and democracy will be convened in co-operation with the OAU in southern Africa in 1992.

UNESCO will provide assistance in the training of leaders and planners in key nation-building areas, including applied social sciences, science and technology, social communication and education. ■

FRANCINE FOURNIER
is UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences. A former professor of political science at the University of Montreal and at the University of Quebec (Montreal), she has served as director of research and later president of the Quebec Human Rights Commission and as president of the Canadian Equality Rights Panel. She is the author of several books and articles related to human rights.

A chronology of repression and resistance

1652
■ The Dutch East India Company sets up a trading station at the Cape.

1659
■ First battles by the Khoi in defence of their land against the settlers.

1702
■ First major military clash between settlers and Xhosa people near the banks of the Fish River.

1806
■ Britain takes over the Cape from the Dutch.

1845-1875
■ System of segregation introduced throughout Natal under British colonial rule.

1860
■ Indentured labourers begin to be brought from India to Natal to work in the sugar plantations.

1867
■ Discovery of major diamond deposits.

1886
■ Discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand.

1899-1902
■ Anglo-Boer War.

1906
■ Suppression of the Bambata rebellion marks the end of the first phase of armed resistance to colonial conquest.

1910
■ Britain formally transfers power to the white minority in South Africa, and the Union of South Africa is established.

1912
■ January 8. Founding of the African National Congress (ANC).

1913
■ Land Act prevents Africans from acquiring land outside "reserves", amounting to 7 per cent of the total land area of the country, as a "temporary" measure.

1936
■ Native Trust and Land Act increases the land set aside for Africans to 13 per cent of the total area of the country, fixing "once and for all" the distribution of land. The increase in land is presented as compensation for the elimination of African parliamentary voting rights.

1945
■ A strike by 100,000 African miners closes many mines. The strike is broken by armed police: at least 12 miners are killed, 1,200 injured and many trade unionists arrested.

1949
■ ANC adopts Programme of Action, ushering in a period of mass campaigns.

1950
■ Group Areas Act passed as a powerful measure for the continuation and extension of racial segregation.
■ June 26. On this day, subsequently known as Freedom Day, demonstrations and strikes are held in opposition to the Suppression of Communism Bill.

1951
■ Bantu Authorities Act provides for setting up bantustan structures.

1952
■ June 26. Launch of Defiance Campaign against Unjust Laws by the ANC and the South African Indian Congress.

1953
■ Public Safety Act enacted, giving the executive the power

Natal Indian Women's delegation to the Congress of the People, 1955.

to declare a State of Emergency.
■ Segregation of trade unions made a condition of registration. Exclusion of Africans from official negotiating machinery, and consequent outlawing of strikes by African workers.

1955
■ Formation of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), the first non-racial trade union federation, and a subsequent member of the Congress Alliance.
■ June 26. Freedom Charter adopted by the Congress of the People, jointly organized by the components of the Congress Alliance under the leadership of the ANC.

1956
■ August 9. In protest at the extension of passes to African women, 20,000 women march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

1956-1961
■ Treason Trial in which 156 leaders of the Congress movement are eventually acquitted of High Treason.

1959
■ Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) formed.

1960
■ March 21. Police kill 69 people in the Sharpeville massacre, during a peaceful demonstration against the pass laws called by the PAC.
■ March 30. State of Emergency: 22,000 people detained or arrested. The Unlawful Organizations Act is passed and used to ban the ANC and the PAC.
■ May 31. Foundation of the apartheid republic, with a military mobilization to prevent protests and demonstrations. Eight to ten thousand people arrested and many detained under the "12-day law", the first law allowing detention without trial.
■ December 31. First operation of Umkhonto we Sizwe ("Spear of the Nation"), formed by leaders of the ANC and allied organizations to undertake armed resistance.

1962
■ Nelson Mandela secretly visits several countries to seek facilities for military training and returns to South Africa to continue working underground.

1963
■ "Rivonia Trial" of Umkhonto We Sizwe leaders, including Nelson Mandela.

1967-1968
■ Joint actions by ANC and the Zimbabwe African People's Union against the Smith régime in Rhodesia.

1969
■ South African Students Organization (SASO) formed.

1973
■ Wave of strikes by black workers.

1976
■ Internal Security Act passed, to introduce even harsher repressive measures.
■ June 16. Soweto massacre as police shoot at schoolchildren protesting against apartheid education. The protests develop into a general uprising.

1977
■ September 12. Death in detention of Steve Biko.
■ October 19. Banning of 18

Above, demonstrators burn their pass books (1959).
Below, from left to right: a 1961 protest against the Group Areas Act of 1950, which had intensified residential segregation; police action against a white student demonstration in Cape Town (1972); young blacks march in the streets of Soweto to commemorate the massacre of 16 June 1976.

organizations, including most of the black consciousness organizations, and two newspapers with a black readership (the *World* and *Weekend World*).

1979

■ April 6. Solomon Mahlangu, ANC combatant, executed.

1980

■ March 21. Launch of campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela by the *Sunday Post* newspaper (successor to the banned *Weekend World*).
■ Countrywide boycotts against apartheid education, a wave of industrial militancy, protests against rent increases and bus boycotts combine in a period of sustained popular resistance. In June ANC guerrillas sabotage the Sasol oil-from-coal complex. Over 900 people detained during the year.

1981

■ January 30. The South African Defence Force attacks houses in Maputo, killing 13 ANC and SACTU members.
■ May 31. The apartheid régime celebrates the 20th anniversary of the founding of the apartheid republic, in the face of a countrywide campaign of protest and boycott of the celebrations.
■ November 4. Successful boycott of the elections to the South African Indian Council.

1983

■ Regional United Democratic Front (UDF) structures established in first half of year.
■ August 20. National launch of UDF.
■ November. White referendum approves government's constitutional plans: boycott of elections to African local authorities.

1984

■ Widespread rent and transport boycotts.
■ August. Over 80 per cent of voters boycott elections to new Coloured and Indian chambers of parliament.
■ September 14. New parliament opened. Police violence against rent protests in Vaal area sparks protests across the country.
■ October. Troops move into townships in strength.

1985

■ Mass resistance continues; consumer boycotts and stay-aways spread.
■ February. Nelson Mandela rejects offer of conditional release from prison, requiring him to renounce armed struggle.
■ June. ANC National Consultative Conference in Zambia calls for "people's war".
■ July 20. Partial State of Emergency declared.
■ November 30. Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) formed.

1986

■ Mass resistance continues; large-scale protest stay-aways; extensive detentions and repression; public calls to unban ANC.
■ June 12. National State of Emergency declared.

1987

■ Strikes in mines and in public sector; violent conflict involving Inkatha escalates in Natal.
■ June 16. One and a half million workers stay away from work to commemorate Soweto uprising.
■ July. Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, between Afrikaner intellectuals and ANC.
■ November 5. Govan Mbeki released from prison.
■ December. Commander of Transkei military force takes over bantustan administration.

1988

■ February. Mutiny by Bophuthatswana bantustan forces suppressed by the South African Defence Force (SADF).
■ February 24. 18 anti-apartheid organizations prohibited from engaging in any political activities.
■ June 6-8. Three million workers stay away from work in protest against Labour Relations Amendment Act.
■ October 26. Boycott of municipal elections.

1989

■ Mass defiance campaign, including hunger strike by detainees, grows during year, accompanied by trade union protests against Labour Relations Amendment Act.
■ January. Beginning of hunger strike by emergency detainees.
■ June. Number of emergency detainees released since

beginning of hunger strike reaches 800.
■ August. Organization of African Unity adopts ANC proposals for negotiations process (Harare Declaration).
■ September. F.W. De Klerk replaces P.W. Botha as State President: large demonstrations in major cities as part of defiance campaign.
■ October 15. Release of eight leading political prisoners; subsequent mass rallies mark virtual unbanning of ANC.
■ December 9-10. Conference for a Democratic Future unites 2,100 organizations.

1990

■ Unbanning of ANC and release of political prisoners leads to talks between ANC and government, but police continue to break up demonstrations. Violence in Natal escalates and spreads to other areas.
■ February 2. De Klerk declares that ANC and other restricted organizations will be unbanned; massive rallies follow. *Moratorium on* executions—at the time there are over 60 political prisoners on Death Row.
■ February 11. Nelson Mandela released from prison; he tours the country addressing mass meetings.
■ March 3. With popular support, bantustan army officers take over administration of Ciskei bantustan.
■ April 5. Bantustan army commander takes over Venda bantustan administration after mass protests.
■ May 2-4. Talks in Cape Town between ANC and government on removal of obstacles to a climate for negotiations result in declaration of a common commitment to peaceful negotiations.
■ June. State of Emergency lifted except in Natal province.
■ July 2. Nationwide stayaway protests against violence in Natal.
■ August 6. ANC-Government meeting in Pretoria results in agreement on definition of political prisoners and detainees to be released according to agreed schedule; ANC suspends armed struggle.
■ August/September. Violent conflict involving Inkatha spreads to Transvaal; police given increased powers.
■ October 8. Government declares that guidelines for release of political prisoners have been agreed, and exiles and others who have carried out political offences can apply for indemnities.
■ October 18: The state of emergency is lifted in the province of Natal.
■ November 7: The Rustenberg Declaration, adopted at a meeting of 230 delegates representing 81 churches, "unequivocally rejects apartheid as a sin".

Source: International Defence and Aid Fund, London.

1991

■ January 8: ANC calls for the convening of an all-party congress while reiterating its demand for an elected constituent assembly and an interim government.
■ February 1: President de Klerk announces in Parliament that the Land Act and Group Areas Act, as well as the Population Registration Act, will be repealed. He issues a "Manifesto for a new South Africa".
■ February 14: The Labour Relations Amendment Bill is adopted by Parliament, invalidating amendments to labour legislation introduced by the authorities in 1988.
■ April 5: ANC addresses an open letter to President de Klerk demanding that the authorities undertake specific measures to end the violence and stating that, otherwise, ANC will suspend any further discussion with Pretoria on negotiations towards a new constitution.
■ April 29: More than 50 persons are killed and 176 are injured in the townships of Soweto and Alexandra.
■ June 5: Parliament votes to repeal the Group Areas Act and the Land Act.
■ June 17: Parliament votes to repeal the Population Registration Act. The population register is to be maintained until a new constitution is negotiated.
■ July 2-6: The National Conference of ANC elects Nelson Mandela as its new President and Walter Sisulu as its Deputy President. Cyril Ramaphosa becomes Secretary General.
■ July 9: The International Olympic Committee recognizes the National Olympic Committee of South Africa, thus paving the way for the country's participation in the next Olympic Games.
■ September 4: The National Party issues its proposals for a new constitution. ANC criticizes them as "an attempt to disguise an effective minority veto".
■ September 14: Some 23 political parties and organizations, including the South African Government, ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) sign a National Peace Accord in Johannesburg.
■ October 25-27: Some 90 organizations, including ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), attend the Patriotic/United Front Conference in Durban and adopt a Declaration calling for a constituent assembly and a sovereign Interim Government/Transitional Authority.
■ November 4-5: Sixty delegates representing 19 parties hold a preparatory meeting to outline the future main tasks of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). They agree on a nine-point agenda for the Convention and on the establishment of a steering committee to facilitate its convening.
■ December 20-21: Nineteen political groups participate in CODESA in Johannesburg. Seventeen of them (including the South African Government and ANC but excluding the IFP) sign a "Declaration of Intent".

United Nations action in 1991

■ June 25-27: An International Conference on Educational Needs of the Victims of Apartheid in South Africa is held in Paris by the Special Committee against Apartheid and UNESCO, in co-operation with the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa. Participants adopt the Paris Statement, which calls on Pretoria to address urgently the education crisis in South Africa and on the international community to provide assistance in this field.
■ August 16: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the South African Government initial a Memorandum of Understanding on the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of an estimated 40,000 South African returnees.
■ December 13: The General Assembly calls upon the international community to resume academic, scientific and cultural links with democratic anti-apartheid organizations and sports links with unified non-racial sporting organizations, and to review existing restrictive measures as warranted by positive developments.

Source: United Nations Centre against Apartheid.

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WOMEN SPEAK OUT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Also featuring:
an interview with Indian physicist
Vandana Shiva

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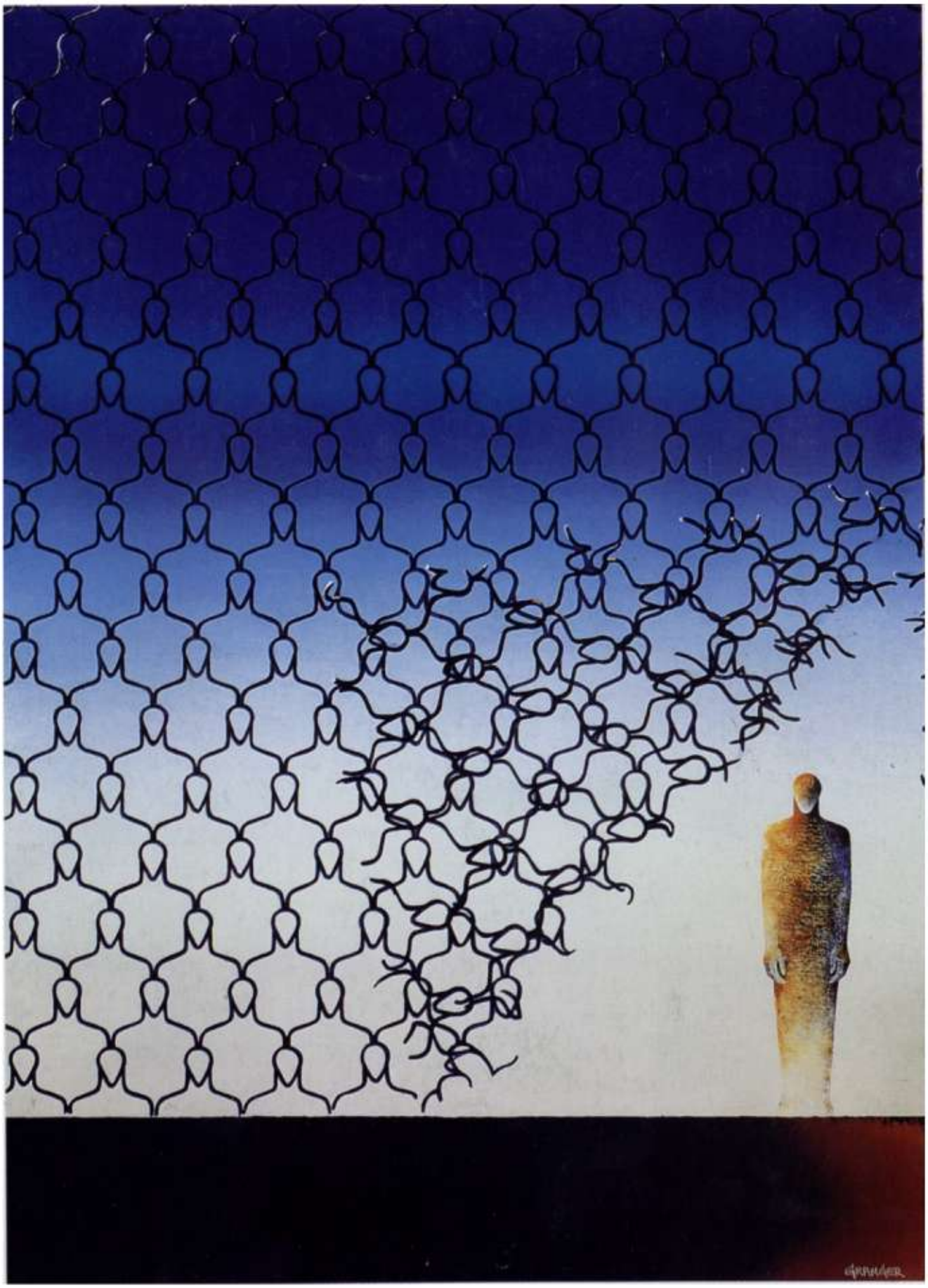

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